5
PUMPKIN SCISSORS
Ryotaro Iwanaga

Pumpkin Scissors

Imperial Army State Section III

by
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First published in Jopon in 2006 by Kodonsho Ltd., Tokyo

Tronslotor: Sotsuki Yomoshito
Adopter: Joshuo Hole Fiolkov
Lettering and retauch: NMSG

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What value do I put
on those hands?

—Ryotaro Iwanaga

Pumpkin Scissors 5

Ryotaro Iwanaga

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About This Story

The bloody war between the Empire and the Republic of Frost left a deep wound throughout the Empire.

Three years have passed since the cease-fire, now known as the Thin Ice Treaty. The Empire is still plagued with starvation and disease while gangs of former soldiers terrorize the populace. The Empire is now fighting another battle to repair the destruction of war. Imperial Army State Section III was established as a "propaganda" tool to placate the masses. But the members of the Imperial Army State Section III, better known as "Pumpkin Scissors," are committed to cutting through the thick skin of corruption and crime to bring justice to the people...

Solice

Alice's older sister and the oldest daughter of the Malvin family. Married. She has nerves of steel underneath her gentle and relaxed demeanor.

Elis

Alice's older sister and the second oldest daughter of the Malvin family. Married. Her dynamic and passionate personality combines well with her sharp intuition. She cares for Alice deeply.

Lionel

Alice's fiancé. He's not a high-ranking nobleman, but his talent and charisma have made him the toast of high society. He's known as the young "Lion" of the financial world.

Lord Paulo

The economic director of the Empire. A brutal, arrogant man. A treacherous nobleman who willingly abuses his power. He's misappropriating public funds in secret.

Lieutenant Alice Malvin

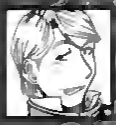
Born into nobility, she's a straightforward and kind soul. The second lieutenant for Pumpkin Scissors, she works hard to advance the cause of reconstruction and war relief for the people.

Corporal Oland

A towering giant, he was a scarred up veteran who reenlisted into Section III. During the war, he was a member of the mysterious Invisible Nine unit.

Warrant Officer Oreldo

An officer in Pumpkin Scissors, aka Stockade Houdini. He comes across as a mellow, lighthearted guy, but he also seems to have a serious side.



Warrant Officer Machs

He appears to be the most sensible of all the Pumpkin Scissors members. Yet, he's friends with Oreldo, so there may be more than meets the eye...

Captain Hunks

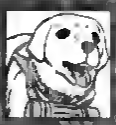
The leader of Section III. His razor-sharp mind is hidden underneath his leisurely, low-key exterior.

Sergeant Major Stecchin

A clumsy young girl, she's the paper pusher for Section III. She doesn't look like a soldier, nor does she consider herself to be one.

Mercury

Section III Courier Private First Class Messenger Dog. He's a lovable male with a goofy face. He hasn't been seen recently...

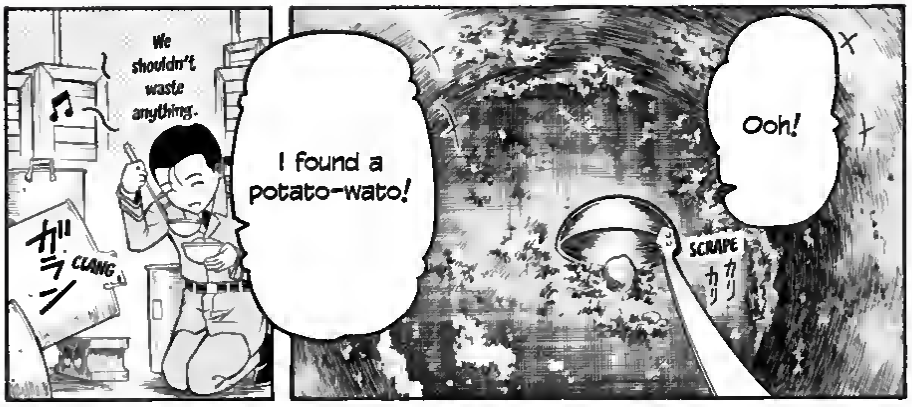


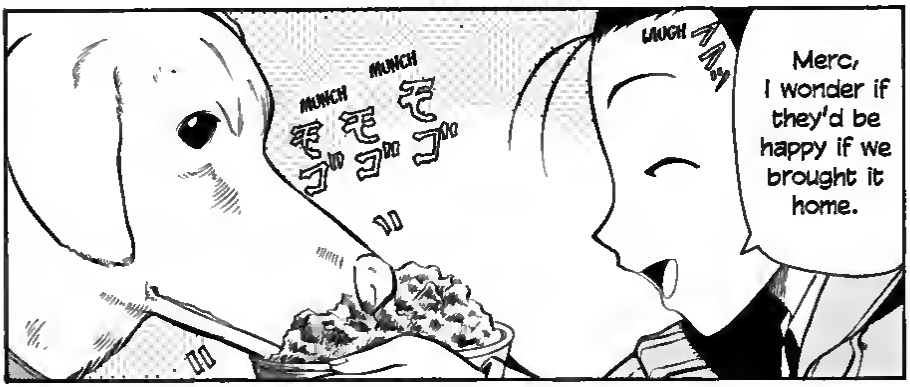
Major Connery

The leader of Section I. He's responsible for the top group of the Empire's security. His responsibilities and authority are higher than his rank suggests.

...was always sighing.
I...
CLANG
.....
...was so unpolished.
Her dancing...
...today...
But...

...I
forgot...
...to
breathe.


We shouldn't waste anything.
CLANG
カラン
I found a potato-wato!
Ooh!
SCRAPE
カリ
カリ


MUNCH
MUNCH
LAUGH
Merc, I wonder if they'd be happy if we brought it home.

That's embezzlement of the food rations.
M-M-M-Merc!?
C-C-C-Captain!?

*This manga is a work of fiction, and names of persons, groups, and places are not associated with those that may exist.

You should come straight home...
...once in a while.

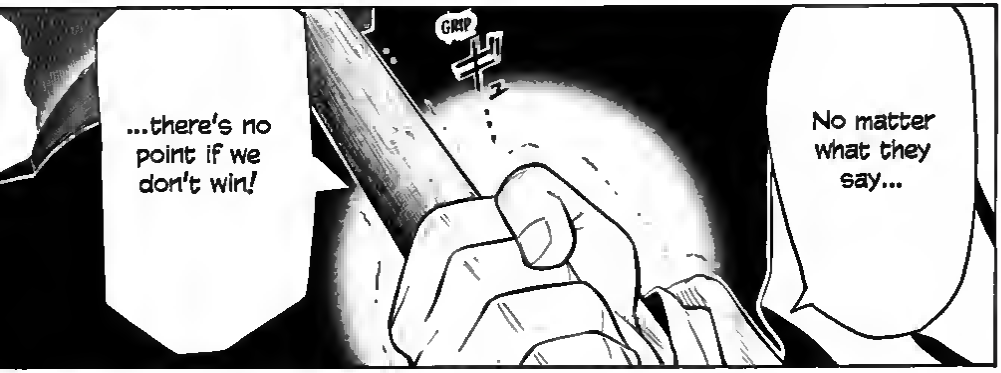
SNIFF
スンスン
HAZE
BREATHE

WHOOSH
STOMP
WHOOSH
!
...is gone!
The hesitation in her step...

CLASH
Your personality shows in your sword. An honest, straightforward strike.
It makes it quite easy to know your next move.

HMPH
Oh. I'm not rooting for that noble brat or anything.

Damn! She almost had him!
GLARE
GRIP

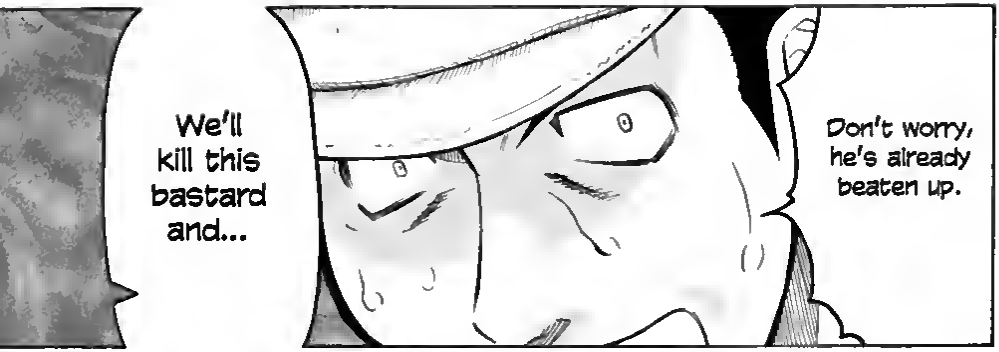

GRIP
...there's no point if we don't win!
No matter what they say...

SST

H-Hey.
STOMP
I'm going to force them to stop this duel!!

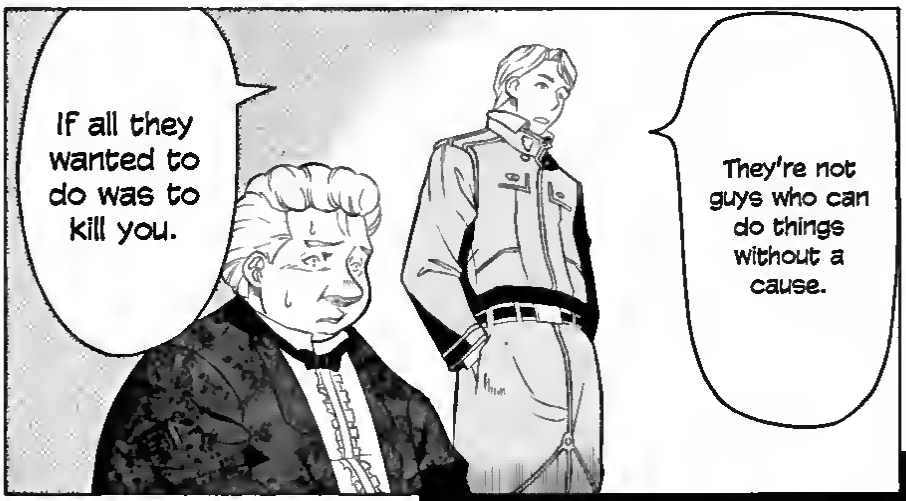
LOOM
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
GULP

If we gang up on him, we can beat him!
H-Hey! Someone lend me a hand.


We'll kill this bastard and...
Don't worry, he's already beaten up.

Who cares about justice anymore!?
Wh—
...be justice?
But would *that*...
MURMUR

...been thugs from the start.
They should have simply...


If all they wanted to do was to kill you.
They're not guys who can do things without a cause.

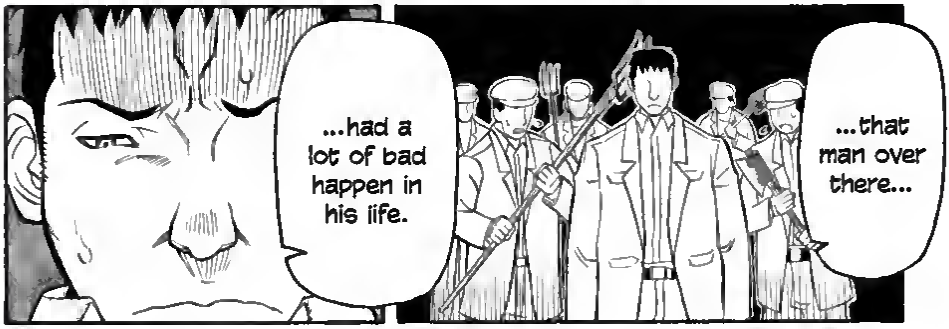
...say justice?
Did you...
You shouldn't have mentioned justice.

Why must I...
...be vilified like this?

Let's say that...
...I was embezzling funds.
It's not as if I killed someone!

Indeed I ate delicious meals!
But is that something to be killed for!?

I heard earlier, but...
.....


...had a lot of bad happen in his life.
...that man over there...

I wouldn't say that.
I know that things aren't that simple in life.
Are you saying that if I didn't embezzle, his child's life would have been saved?
That's nonsense.

...it might mean only a few extra grains of wheat.

...to the average citizen...

Plus.

Even if the embezzled funds were used properly...

If he were to live a moment longer with that grain...

But... if he were able to eat that one grain.

...been able to hear one more phrase from the child.

...he would have...

It would have been tough, but he could have had fond memories instead.
If he heard that one phrase, he might have been able to move on.

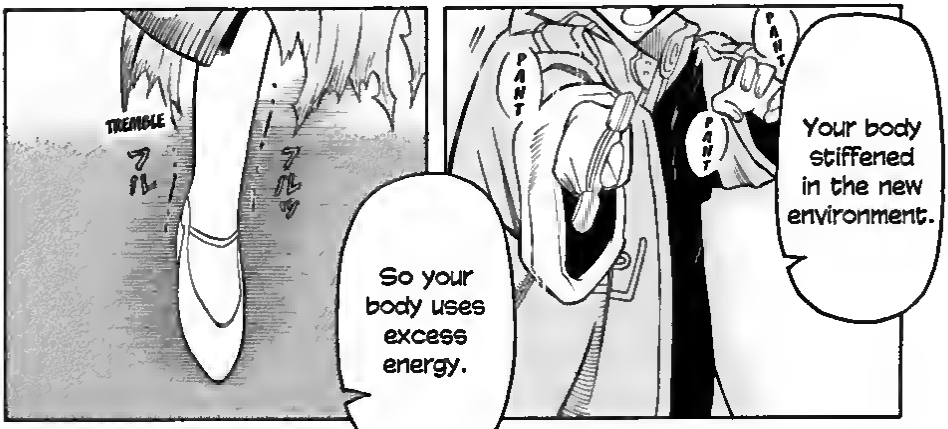
Think about it.
What you took is that one grain.

...how many grains of wheat they could have bought?
With the money you spent...

That's all.
.....
SLASH
CLANG
What is Machs...
...looking at?
CLANG
キン

PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT

The first half of the fight is catching up to you.
PANT
PANT
PANT

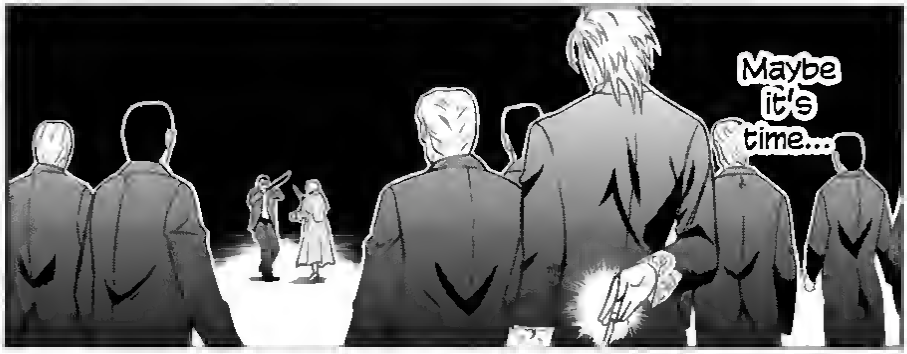

TREMBLE
So your body uses excess energy.
PANT
PANT
PANT
Your body stiffened in the new environment.

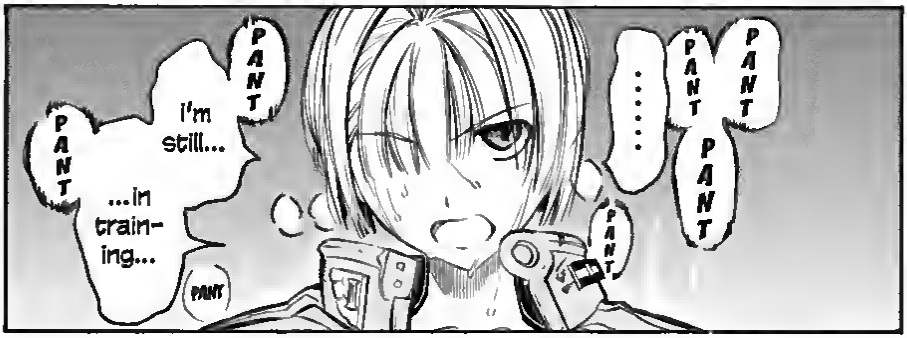
...I must end this soon.
SLOP
Unfortunately...

SST

GRAB

She won't be able to defend against the bodyguard much longer.
She's breathing too hard.


Maybe it's time...


PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
.....
I'm still...
...in training...

...was right handed.
I thought the princess...
...but if it's one-on-one...
PANT
TTP
...I might be able to do it.
PANT

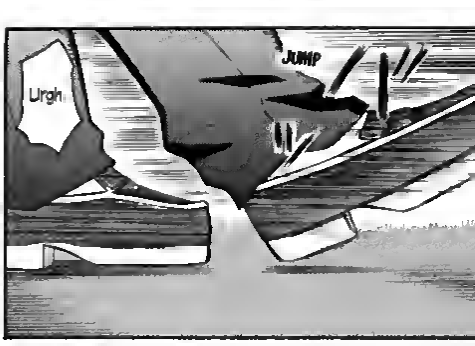
STOMP
WHOOSH
BREATHE
VRRRRST
!

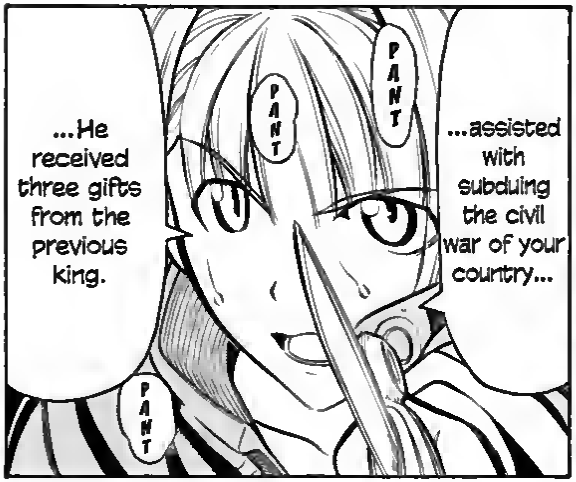
SHRRRK

My swing went through...
GRIP
Urgh!
No, that's not it!
She deflected me!?
Argh!
...but the path was redirected?
SLASH
The force was there...
SWIFF
CLINK
Her sword merged with mine and...

...of my sword!
SHHHHK
...she changed the direction...

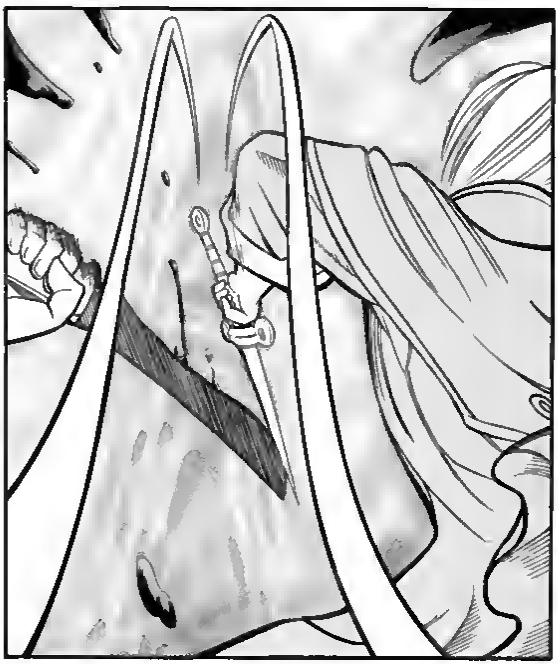
GLARE
...it can't be...
PANT
PANT
PANT
And the distinct crystal clear sound of the sword...


Urgh
JUMP


...He received three gifts from the previous king.
PANT
PANT
PANT
...assisted with subduing the civil war of your country...

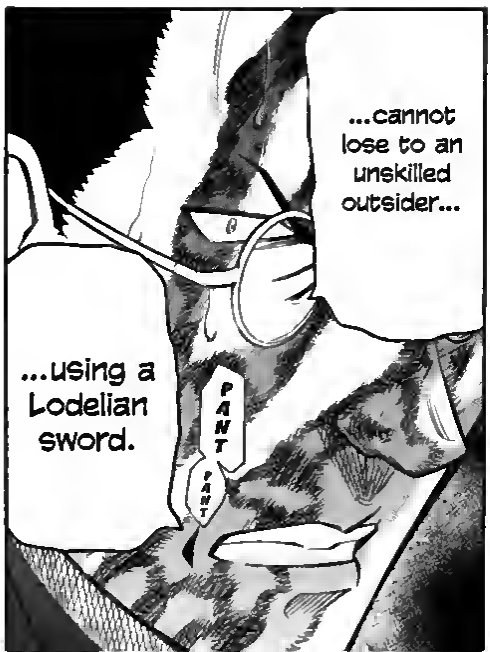
My great grandfather...
PANT
PANT

And lastly...
One was the title "Noble Flamme." Another was the jeweled sword "Noble Flamme."
...and the late king personally taught him a self-defense sword technique.
...my great grandfather lamented how he could not kill teen soldiers who attacked him in the city...
STOMP
GRIND



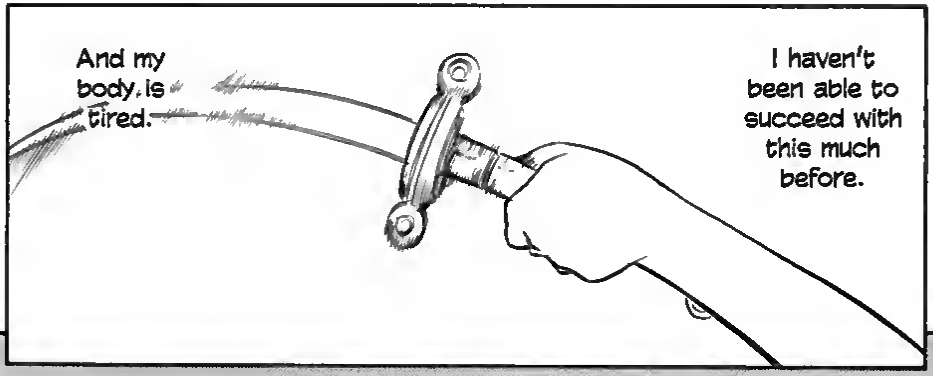
It won't reach...

PANT
PANT
PANT
Main Gauche!

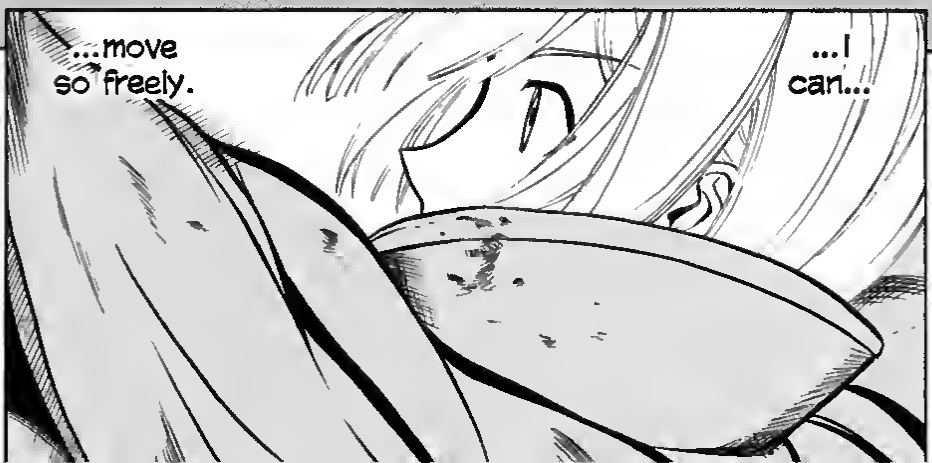

...cannot lose to an unskilled outsider...
...using a Lodelian sword.
PANT
PANT

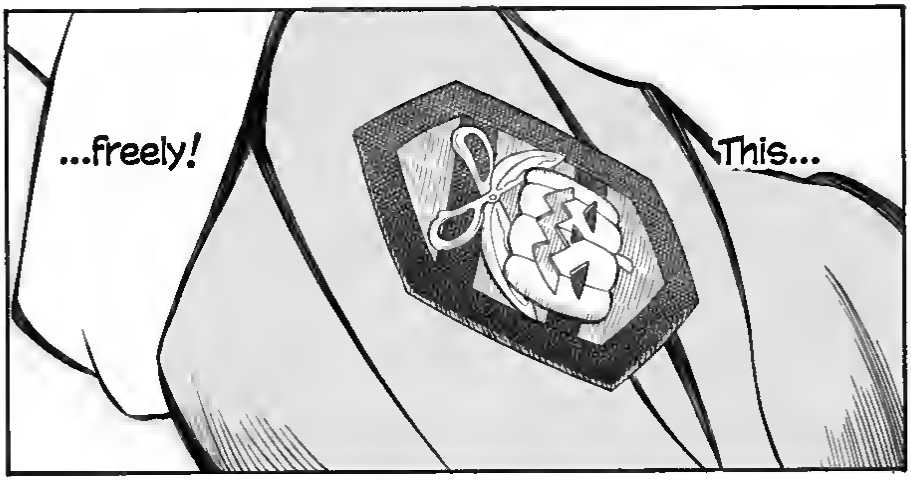
A Royal Guard of Lodelia...
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT

Never!
It's strange.

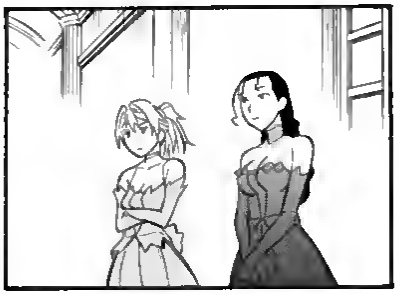

And my body is tired.
I haven't been able to succeed with this much before.

But knowing that I'm in front of my men...


...move so freely.
...I can...


...freely!
This...

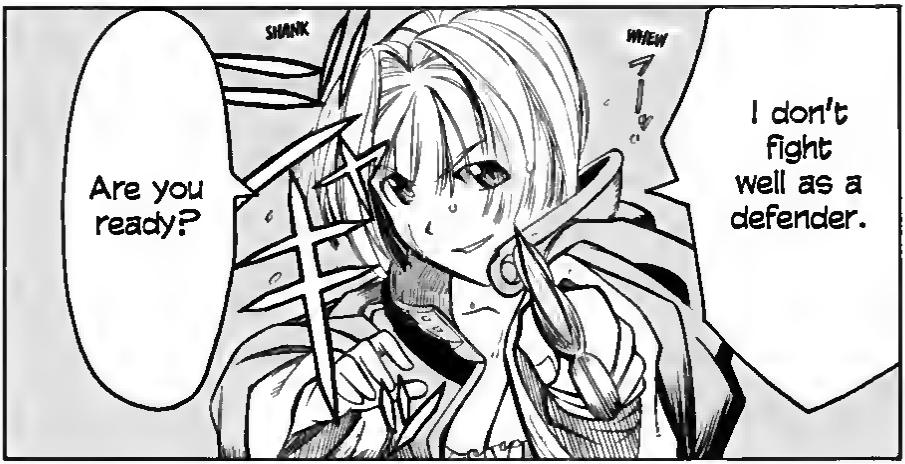
Oh well.



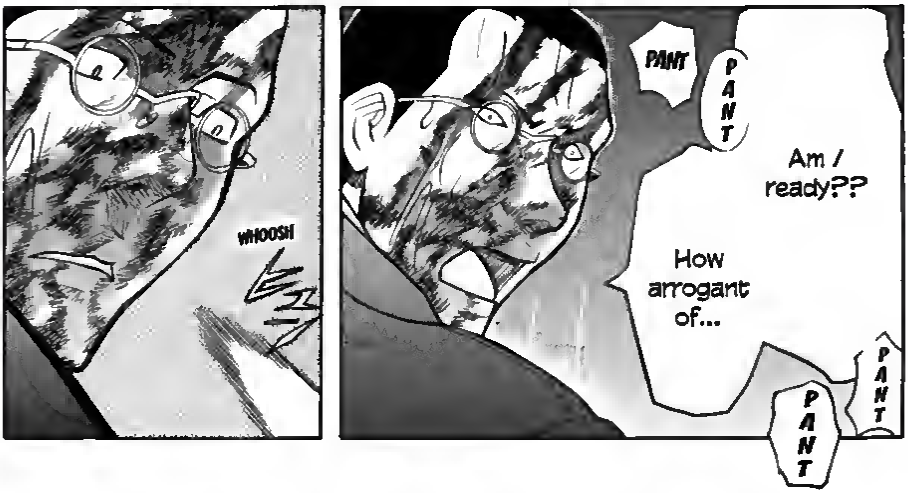
...a single easy step.
She can't even dance...

SHRRRK
SHRRRK
SHRRRK
TREMBLE
GRIP

Lodelia's sword!
PANT
PANT PANT
Lodelia...
I spent years carrying my sheath to my right and wielding with my left.
WHOOSH
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
WHEEZE
PANT
PANT PANT
...I realized something.
PANT PANT
Once I finally got the hang of it...
PANT PANT


SHANK
WHEW
I don't fight well as a defender.
Are you ready?

...returned to normal.
The princess's breathing...


WHOOSH
PANT
PANT
Am I ready??
How arrogant of...
PANT
PANT

No matter how many times you try...
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
...but...
The force of each blow is stronger on the right...

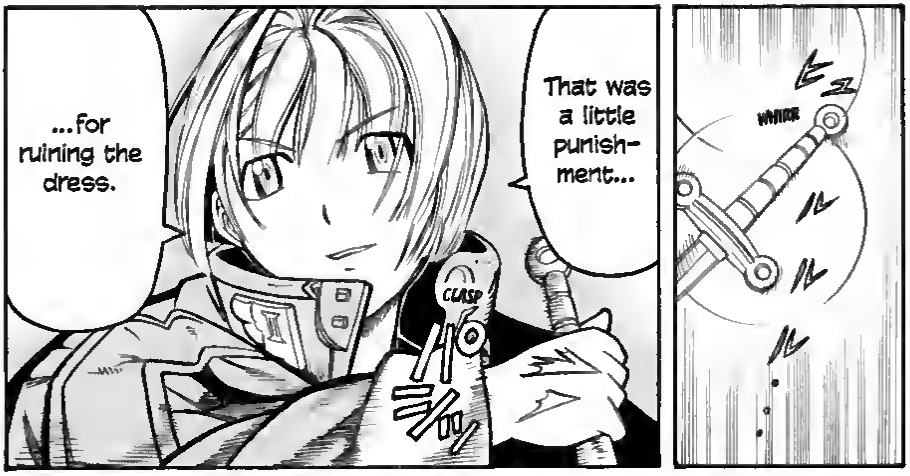
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
...her left is... fast!

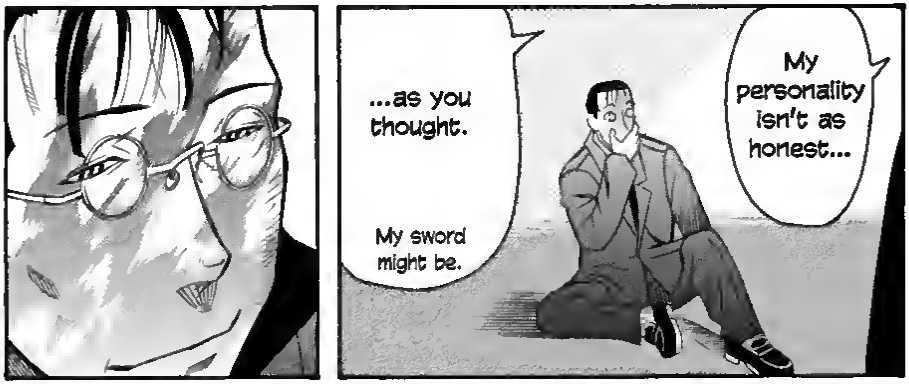
I got too hotheaded about the honor of Lodelia.
I miscalculated.
SLIP

SLIP
GRIP

!
BAM
CLANG
Or was there something else to make this noblewoman fight hard?
SLAP
No...
I was just weak.

SLAP


That was a little punish-ment...
CLASP
...for ruining the dress.
WHOOSH


My personality isn't as honest...
...as you thought.
My sword might be.

That hurts, you know.
You win, "Noble Flamme."
FU!
WHEW

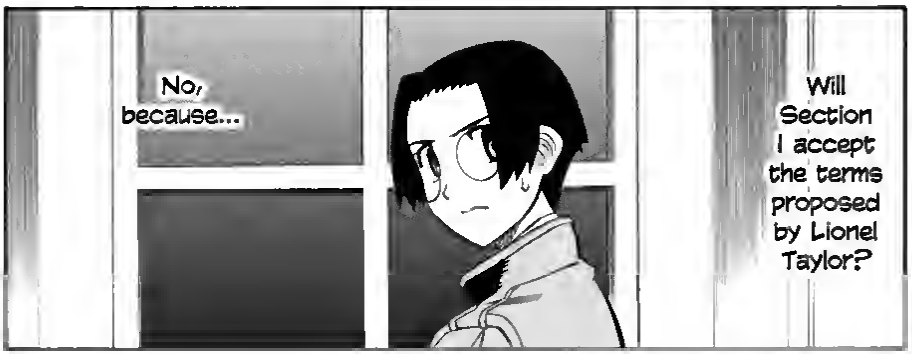
Since Malvin won...
Yeah.
We're...
...going to be spared, right?
H-Hey, what should we do?
I dunno...

.....

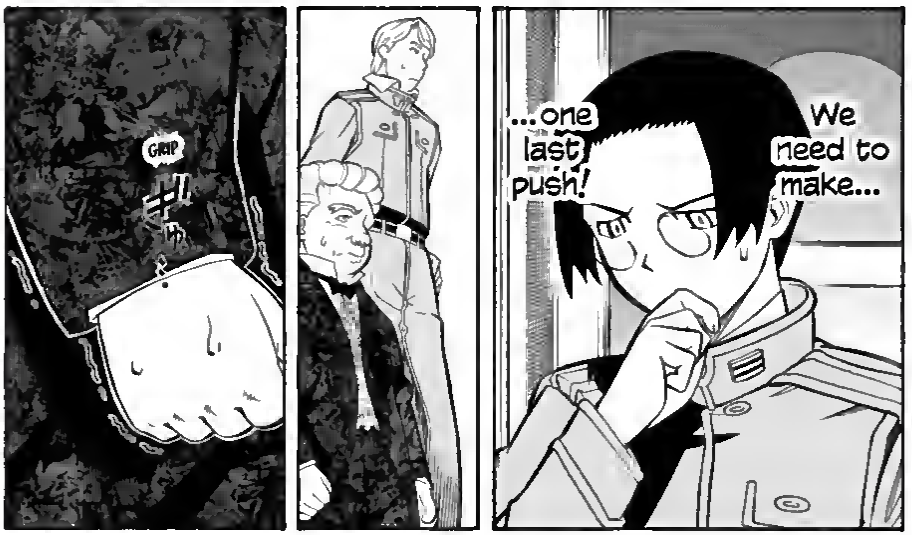
!
FTT

...sniffed them out!!
Section I...

...the gas lamps along the road to this ballroom are put out.
Just as I thought! Little by little...


No, because...
Will Section I accept the terms proposed by Lionel Taylor?

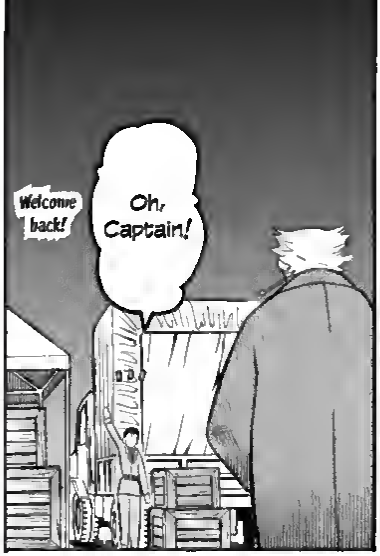
...they haven't put down their weapons!


GRIP
...one last push!
We need to make...

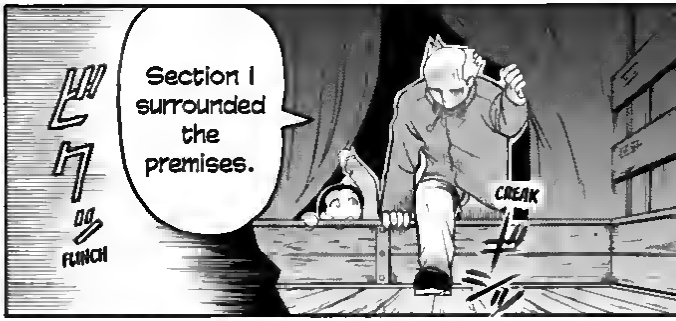
Even if you are Section I leader, Captain Hunks.
We can't let you go beyond this.

Hmm.
Please don't interfere with our...with the military's tactics.
With all due respect, aren't you off duty, sir?

Something ran up?
Huh? Did something pass by...?
Oh.
JUMP
DASH

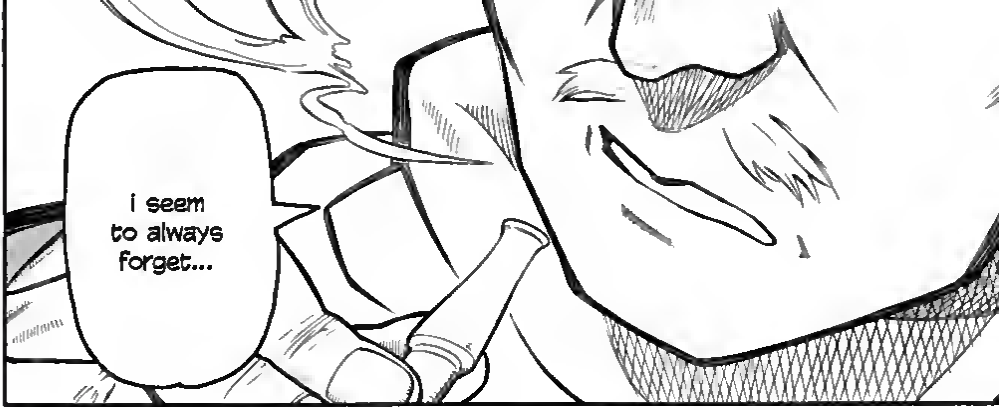

Welcome back!
Oh, Captain!

YAWN
Probably a cat.
It's a high wall.
TROD
TROD


Section 1 surrounded the premises.
FLINCH
CREAK

No one can escape. They're all going to be arrested...
...and everyone, including family members, will be tortured.

Don't worry. Second Lieutenant Alice is there.
My family... my family has nothing to do with this.
Right, Captain?
We sent Merc to deliver a secret strategy.
Oh. Well...
Uh? Then why did you send him?
THUMP
THUMP
There is no secret strategy.



...isn't the only weapon in Section III.

That Alice L. Malvin...

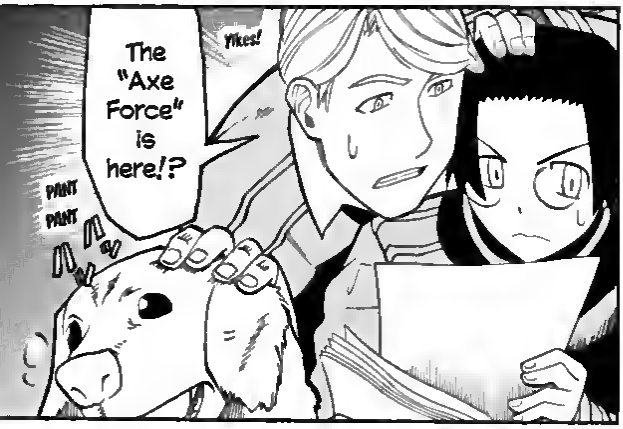
We came to kill the nobles! Not to watch some duel!
But that's because we thought we were doing justice.
Are you scared of capital punish-ment!?
Uh, this isn't looking so good...
Hey, young soldier.
フラ…フラ…
TREMBLE
If that's a noble-woman...
WOBBLE
ヨロ…
STARE
じ…

...what do...
...I look like?
A nobleman...
...who just committed a crime.
It's that woman.
Dammit!
SLAP

...lost their nerves.
...everyone...
Because of her...
I'm fine.
WOBBLE
Second Lieutenant...
DASH
If you hadn't been here!
Corpora-!?
COVER

CLOMP
MISS
Urgh.
SLIDE
Mercury!?
GRRRR
A military dog!?

DAZE

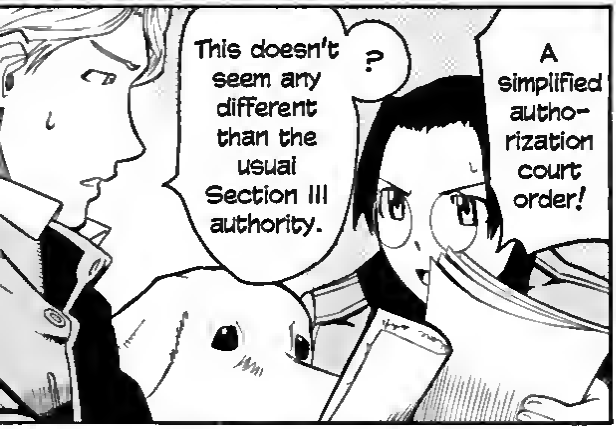

Yikes!
The "Axe Force" is here!?
PANT PANT

It's from the captain!

Mobilizing the police units.

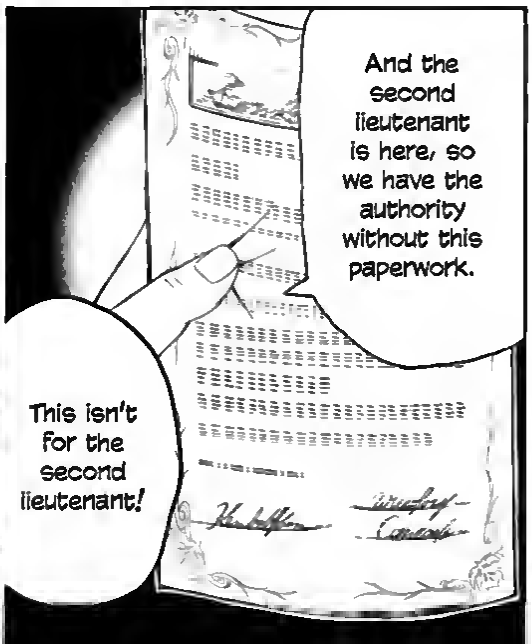
We're completely surrounded!!
...get these guys to disarm themselves...
Even if we're able to...
GLANCE
WHIFF
They're closing in on us.
Yeah. And there isn't a lot of time left.
There's no way to get them home without being noticed.

...they plan to rush in without saving lives first.
Perhaps...


This doesn't seem any different than the usual Section III authority.
?
A simplified autho-rization court order!

.....
What about this?

All of this is an authority form for us!


This isn't for the second lieutenant!
And the second lieutenant is here, so we have the authority without this paperwork.

No...
TWWP
!
...we need the common folks to drop their weapons.
WOBBLE
Even then...
You came to express your feelings to the nobles.
So I'm sure you aren't satisfied with this.

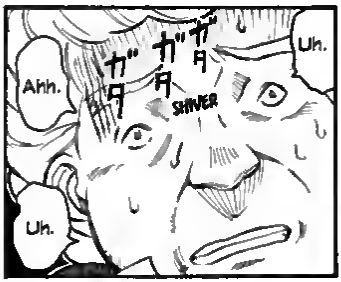
Come.
I'll take you on.
Lieut...
Where do you think you're going, Malvin!
Y-
You said it's three on one!

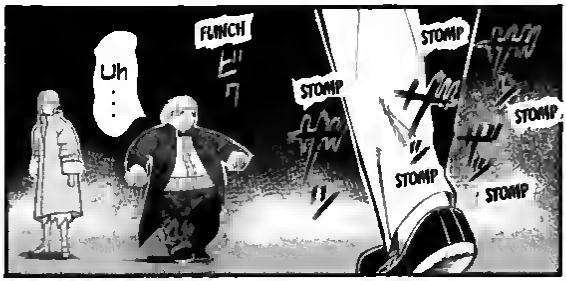
Your duel against me...
...isn't over yet!
BADUM
BADUM
But you look like you can hardly mo...
I-I-I'll let you...
BADUM
BADUM

...appoint someone else to take over for you!
You don't care who I choose?
I don't care.
GULP

Then... with him!
Fine.
.....
Paulo and a commoner duel!?
Hey, If it's a duel...
BUZZ
...if a commoner kills a nobleman...
...it's not a crime!

Why...?


Uh.
Ahh.
SHIVER
Uh.


FLINCH
Uh...
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP

DASH
Argh!

KICK

Why did you come out!?
Ugh!
PANT
PANT
...you could have gotten out of here alive!
If you'd listened to that man's terms and surrendered...
...what's on line is honor.
That's why!...
It's as the lady said...
There are no such terms!
DRIP
ポタ
DRIP
ポタ

...for this duel?
What will you put on the line...
For the nobility...
As a noble...

...risked your life for!?
That's what you...
...we just laughed it off.
At the time...

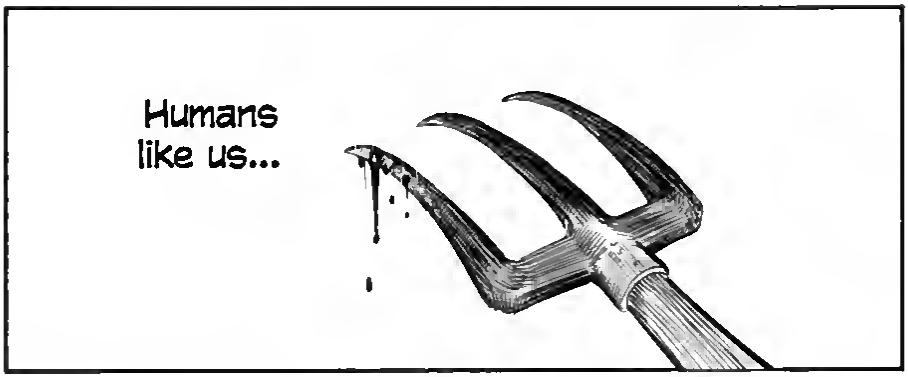
CLICK
BANG!
BANG!
TREMBLE
Ee...
Eek!
I don't want to die!
GROVEL
Please spare my life!
TREMBLE

My kid...
...didn't want to die either!
I'm sorry.
I'm sorry.
I...
We're sorry too.
I'm sorry.
!

"Sorry"!? You... You nobles...
...don't have any sense of guilt!

Don't you dare cry!
Don't apologize!

That's some-thing humans do!
POW
Only humans like us...


Humans
like us...

Humans...

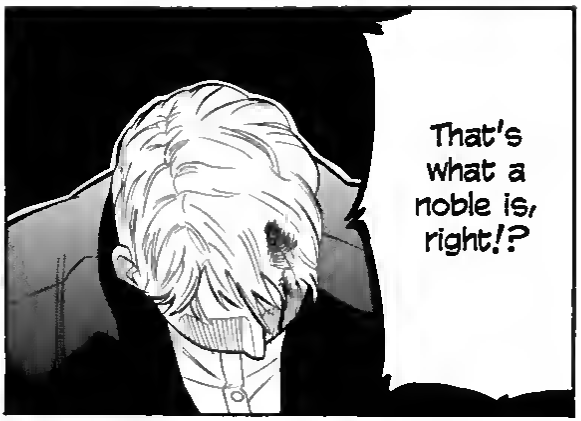
I'm really
sorry.

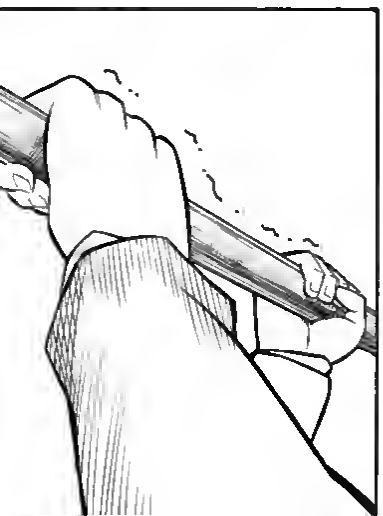
.....

You nobles are...
TREMBLE
...arrogant... lazy...
...and think of us merely as bugs.

Pretending you haven't done anything wrong!!
You should sit back and laugh at us.

You're right.


That's what a noble is, right!?

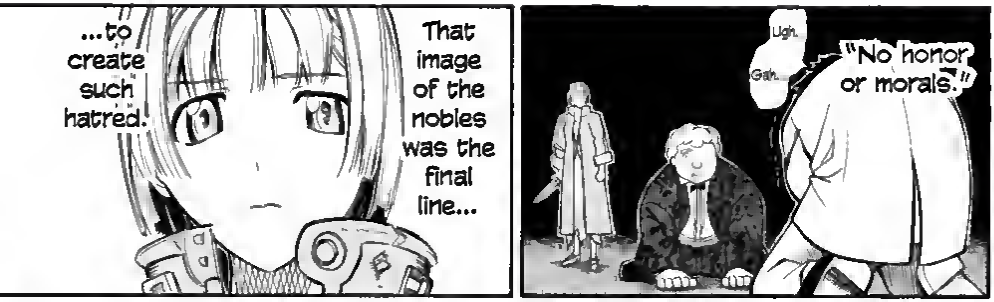


I'm sorry.

CLANG

Ahh.
Ah.
Uh...
Oh...
CLANG
It's probably use-less... by now.
CLANG
We probably can't...
It's no use.
CLANG
CLANG
...kill them.

Dammit!
Dammit!
Dammit!
Dammit!
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
They threw down their arms.
.....
PAT
ポン



There is...one final important job left to do.

B-
But if we go along with what that guy said, we're innocent.
Stop it. He wasn't the one who fought us.
And we made a decision.
Because of you, the commoners were moved.
And because it's you...
Justice against evil.
...you cannot forgive them here.
For assault and attempted murder...
Wait a minute, young miss.

...over you, a noble!
In this location, we the Pumpkin Scissors have the higher authority...
VROOM

That's why I'm...
What?

Currently I lead Pumpkin Scissors.
As I said, Oreldo, you'll be the leader for the time being!!
Me?
Because you're off duty, you're just a noblewoman.
STOMP
STOMP

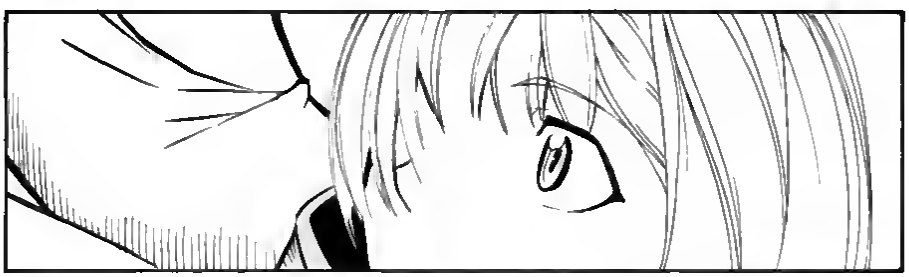
For the crime...
Section III will arrest all of you!
...property damage!
CRUMBLE
ガラ…
Oreldo, Maches.
……
I understand how you feel...
Lady Malvin...

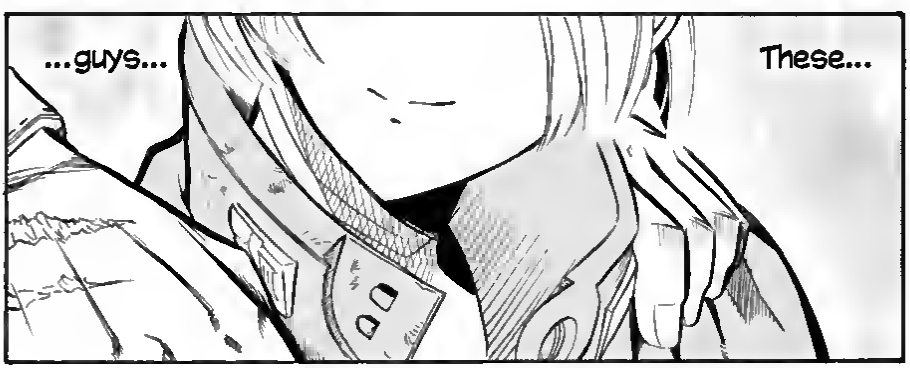
Hanks
Because we have this authority order, we can arrest you too!
If you insist on stepping in, we will determine that you are obstructing our job!
...with your own personal sentiments.
We cannot have you get in the way of our jobs...

Second Lieutenant, you lose today.

Who are you saying I lost to?
Lose!?

To Pumpkin Scissors.

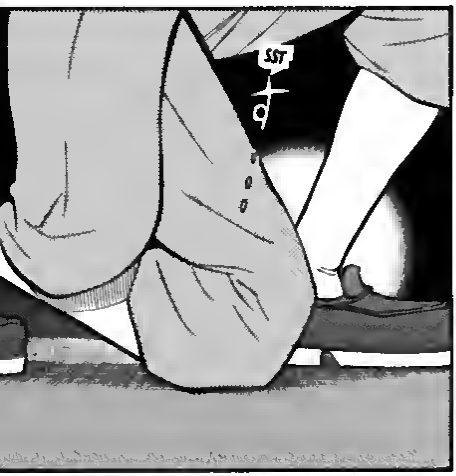



...guys...
These...

I won't forget this.
Oh wait! Don't get happy yet!
Section III can only protect you in custody for three days.
!
Then during those three days...
Then everyone will be sent to the torture room.
On the fourth day, Section I will try to take you away...

Marquis Hoost!?
!
...can you let me deal with it?

I'm sure they'll take good care of you.
There are some in the upper management of the military who'll meet with me.


SST

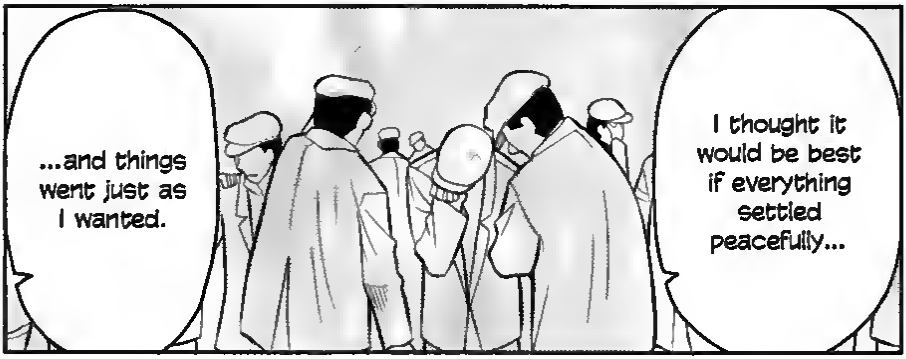
I don't want you to take it as pity from us...
...but as a way to repent.

I beg of you.
W...
Lord!
On his knees in front of the public!

We did it, guys!
We were able to defeat the nobles!
We made some mistakes, but we were able to survive too!
...

CHEER

I was...
...immature.


...and things went just as I wanted.
I thought it would be best if everything settled peacefully...

...I don't know why.
But...

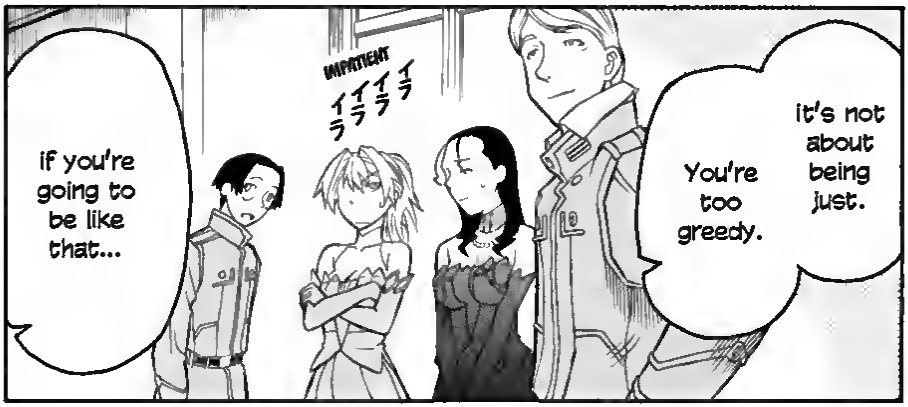
I couldn't do the right thing.
That's how I feel.

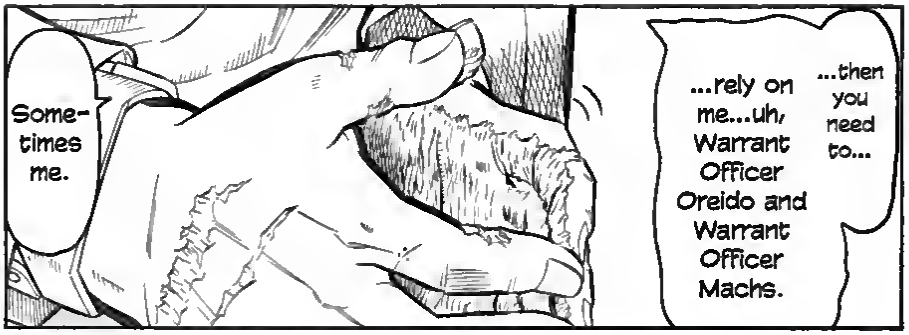
The person who was the most right...
The one who showed justice in the end...

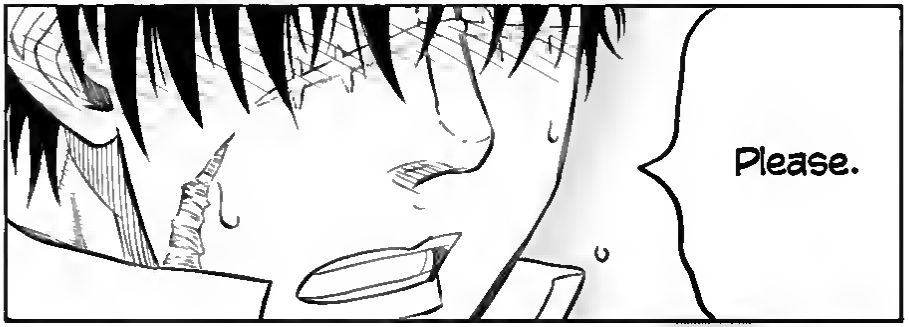
Today...
...I looked in through the window and realized something.

...Second Lieutenant.
You're small...

...on getting your nose into everything.
But still, you insist...
compared to you.
Well,
...who can do anything.
You're not some-one...


if you're going to be like that...
IMPATIENT
イライラ
イライラ
You're too greedy.
it's not about being just.


Some-
times
me.
...rely on
me...uh,
Warrant
Officer
Oreido and
Warrant
Officer
Machs.
...then
you
need
to...

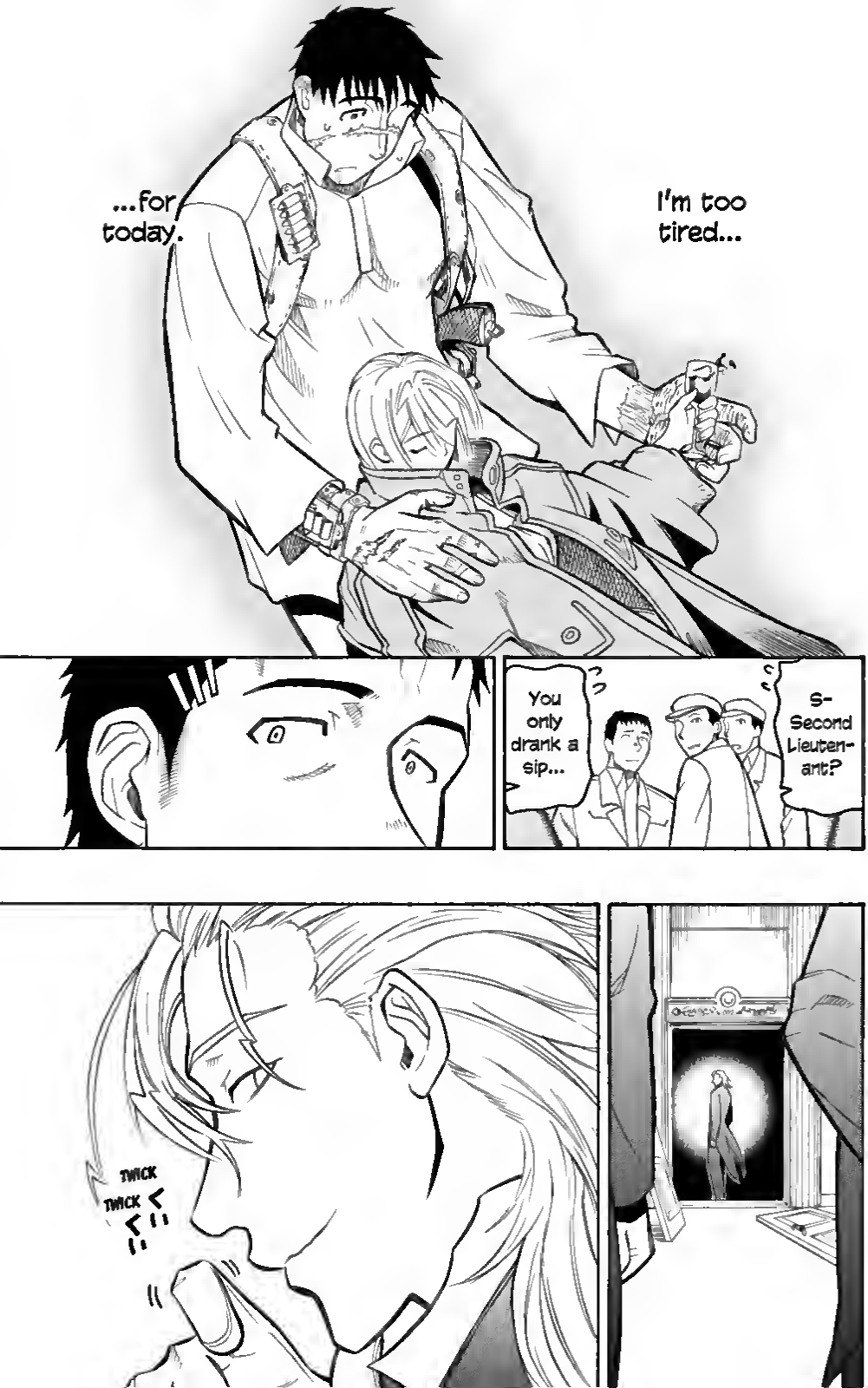

Please.

I relied on
you earlier,
but you
immediately
betrayed
me.

Uhh...
Uhh...
I-
...but in the end, you sided with the warrant officers?
What do you mean "I lost"?
You said you were going to protect me...

I'll do my best to protect your back someday.
I'll do my best!

Aaaah!
Alcohol!!
SIP
Don't say someday. Protect me now.


...for today.
I'm too tired...
You only drank a sip...
S-Second Lieutenant?
TWICK
TWICK

i guess there are different types of nobles.
It's not that we're satisfied.
But if there are those like you and that lady...
SHHHHNK

SHIHINK
SHIHINK
SHIHINK
What?
Yeah.
It was indeed splendid!
Did you see the princess's sword-play?
But...
His height is the same...
His voice is the same...

...he looks awfully immature.
I like being the winner.
HMPH
But that need can be rather tricky.
In order to feel like one...
...I have to keep fighting.
Winners are only born out of battles.
But...
GASP
GASP

...there is...
...no one.

I was able to do everything since I was young.
There was no child who could compete against me.

So I had no choice but to play with adults...
...but even adults started to avoid battling with me.
If you have something to say...
PLOP
ポス

Let's duel.
Why do I have to duel against you?
You know my face.
Marquis Hoost won't be able to protect the ring leader.
And you won't be able to endure Section I's torture.

Aww.
If it was going to turn out like this, I shouldn't have shown my face.

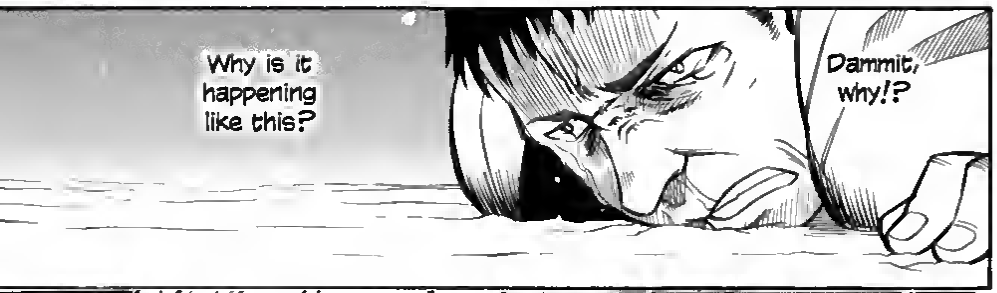
SHIVER

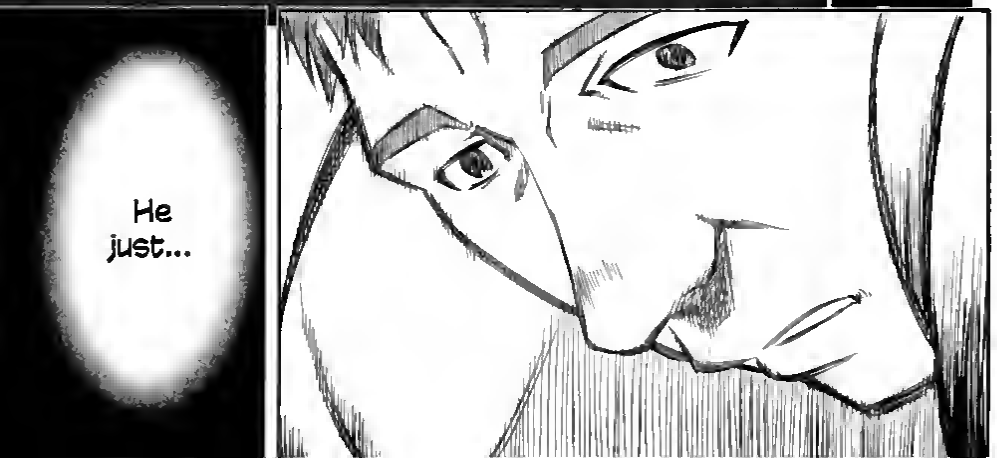
SWISH

CLICK
.....!

What!? I can't pull the trigger.
!?
GRIP
GRIP
...finger...
My...
Argh!!

I guess... it was kinda thrilling.
LIFT
Thank you.


Why is it happening like this?
Dammit, why!?

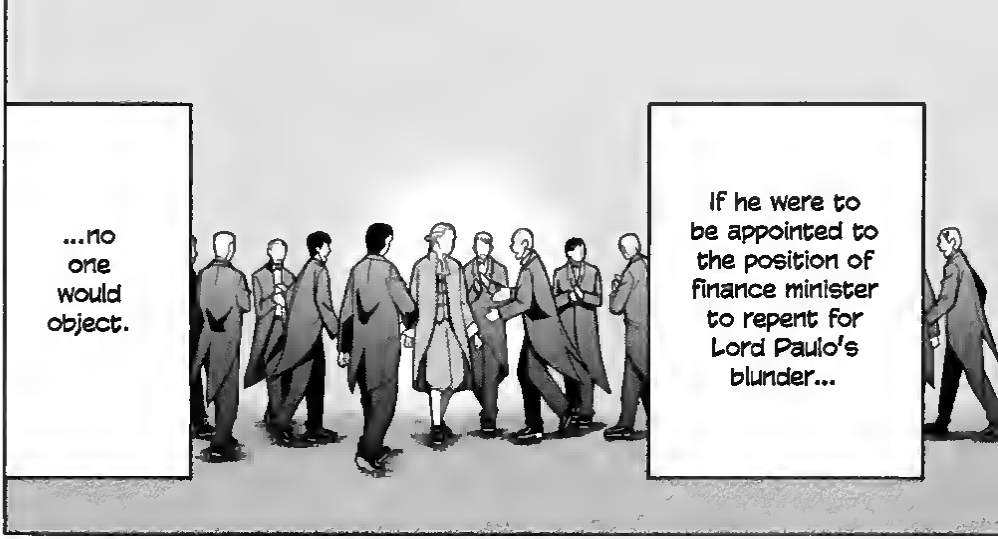

He just...

...sighed...
...in...
...boredom...

You were here?

We'll take care of that body.

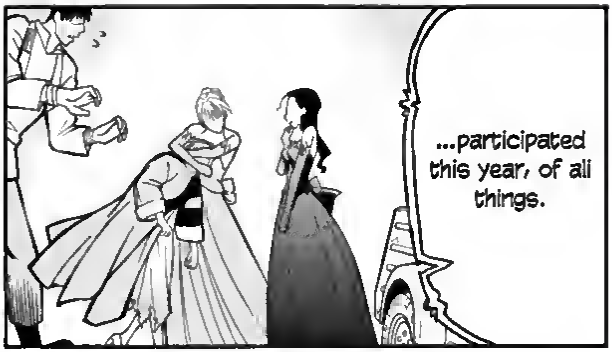
Were you planning on escaping the unrest...
...without our assistance?
It's a battle with some thrill.
I had the confidence to protect Marquis Hoost, though.
ZIP
"After the incident, Marquis Hoost will plead for mercy for the commoners who started the unrest."
"Marquis Hoost's admiration will increase among the nobles and the commoners."


...no one would object.
If he were to be appointed to the position of finance minister to repent for Lord Paulo's blunder...

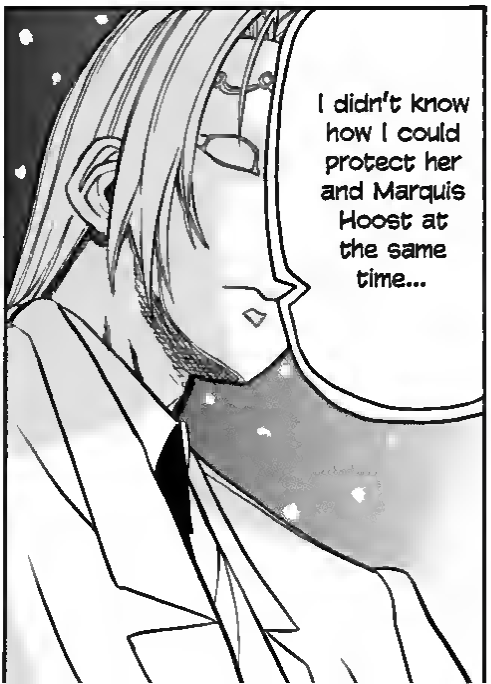
GRIN
And a "seed" of the association will stand on the top of the Empire's economy.

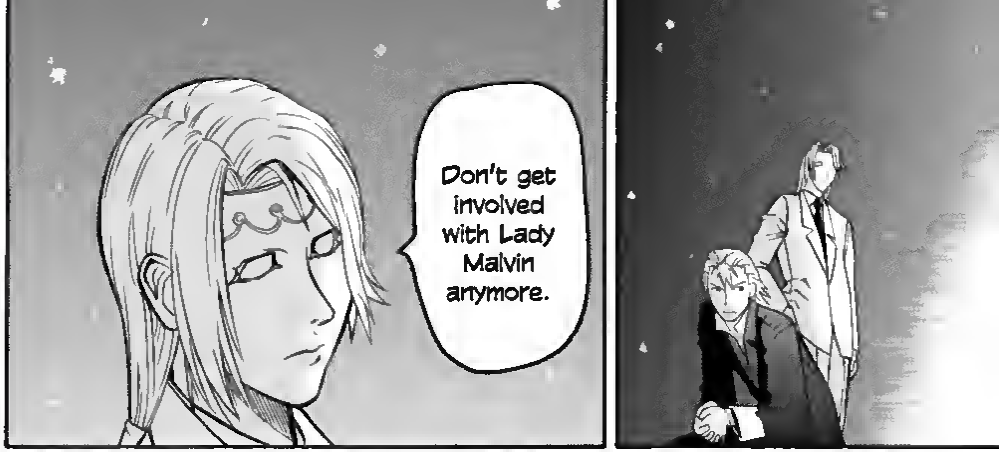
It's as if a child planned this.
Put the plan through me before you proceed next time.
Fine.

The princess who always turns down the invitation every year...
I was worried for a bit today.


...participated this year, of all things.

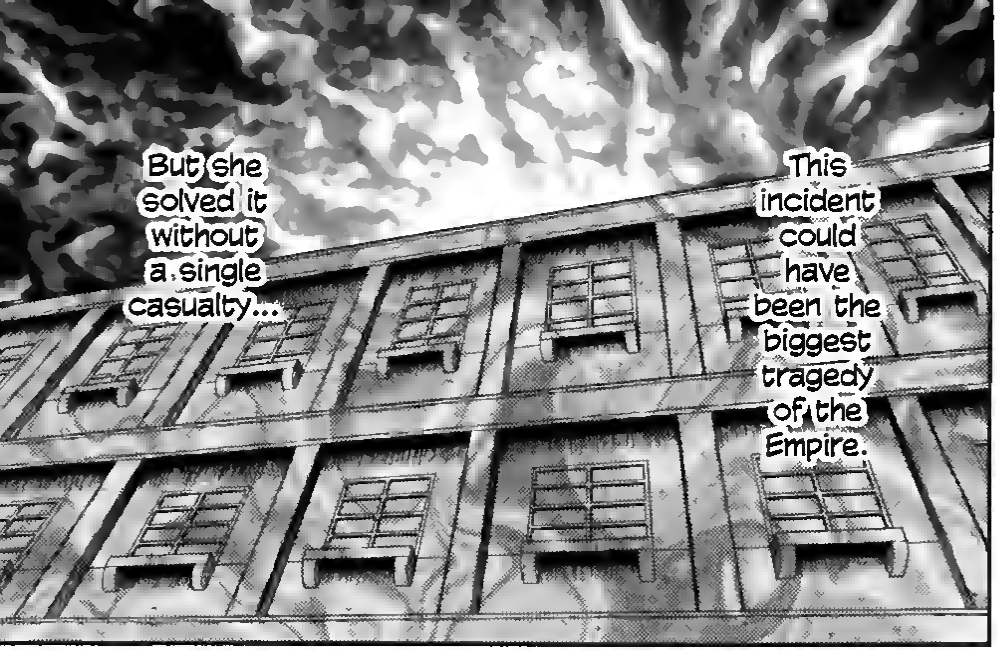
...but it was a needless worry, after all.


I didn't know how I could protect her and Marquis Hoost at the same time...


Don't get involved with Lady Malvin anymore.

AHA…
HA HA HA!
Now that a male heir has been born, there is no need for her.

After the cease fire...
HA HA HA HA!
What's so funny!?


But she solved it without a single casualty...
This incident could have been the biggest tragedy of the Empire.

...several have already figured it out by now.

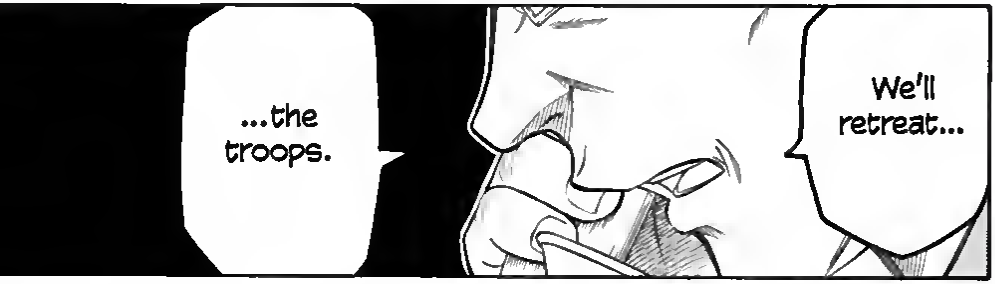
...won't fit well in the Malvin family.
SHOO
The princess's existence itself...

SHIVER
Someone who won't break even if I play with her.
Someone who understands me.
I finally found it.

...who is an equal to me!!
A female lion...
SST
Yes sir.
Let's go, Grand.
.....
...under the silver wheel.
We are all...

Yes. But with such a small troop...
I heard that the Imperial Army State Section III was there.
Yes sir.
Grand.
War relief and reconstruction platoon...
Their name showed up in the report for the water department incident.
...I don't think they could have done anything against the mob.
Mmmm.
MUMBLE
...Pumpkin Scissors.

Information Department
Communications Headquarters
I under-stand.
Yes sir.

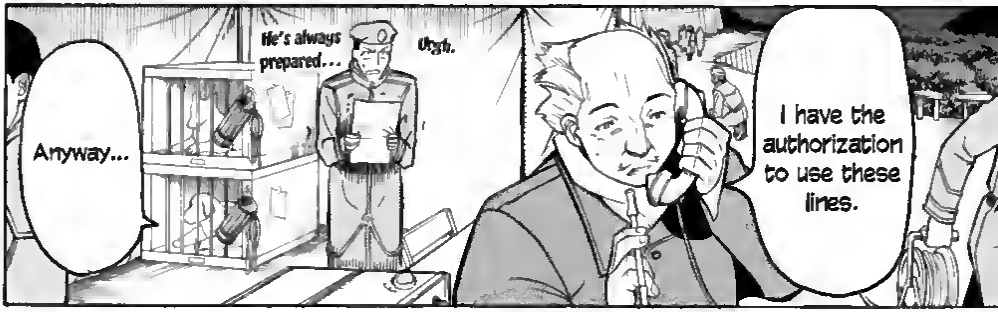

...the troops.
We'll retreat...

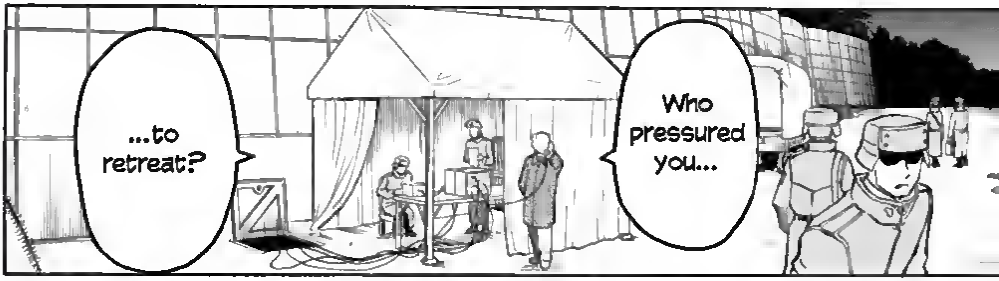
Orders from upper manage-ment, sir?
Continue to observe commu-nications outside the Empire.
"Wait for arrival of the mes-senger dog."
"All troops move to standby.
Send a message to the commu-nications center around the ballroom vicinity!

Using an electronic communicator even...
It was requested by Marquis Hoost who's on site.
CREAK
From Colonel Garshim himself.
As if he was ready for tonight.
Do you think I'm thinking too much about it?

I checked with the seal officer of the Documentation Department.
The seal is the real thing. It is in fact a document from the Finance Ministry.
That's right.
It's an incident where information was stolen out of the Finance Ministry.
It's never too much to think into it.
I'm sure we'll end up releasing those we've captured so far...
The tail end won't know what it's about.
Is there a way to trace it somehow?
Umm, Major!
There's a call on line 8.

GRRR
キーンしゃー
Why are you there!?
!?
Hunks!?
Yo.


He's always prepared...
Urgh.
Anyway...
I have the authorization to use these lines.


...to retreat?
Who pressured you...

HM
I don't know.
I don't have a reason to tell Section III.

Section III's meal distributors for last night...
...the location changed all of a sudden from the Welfare Organization.
What are you talking about?
The biggest donor to that Welfare Organization is...
Marquis Nichols Hoost.
Is he at the ball tonight, by any chance?
The retreat order came from Colonel Garshim.
The colonel and the marquis have been chess buddies for more than twenty years.

HMPH!
It seems like a big mole...
...wiggled its way into the Empire.
#14/ THE END

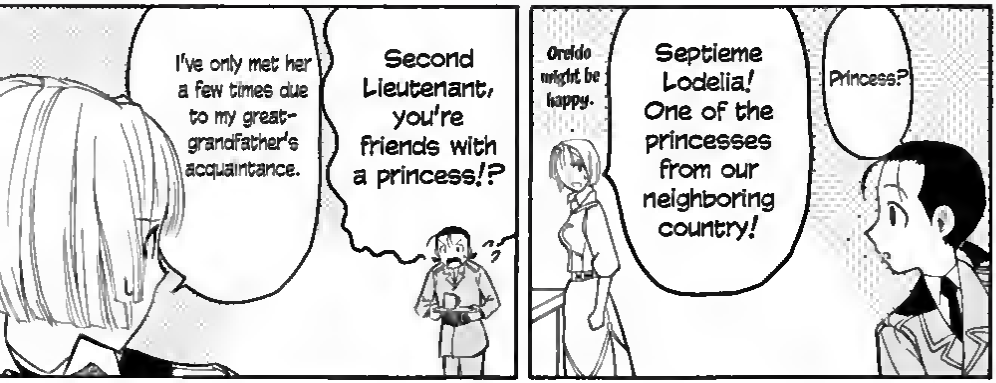
PumpkinScissors

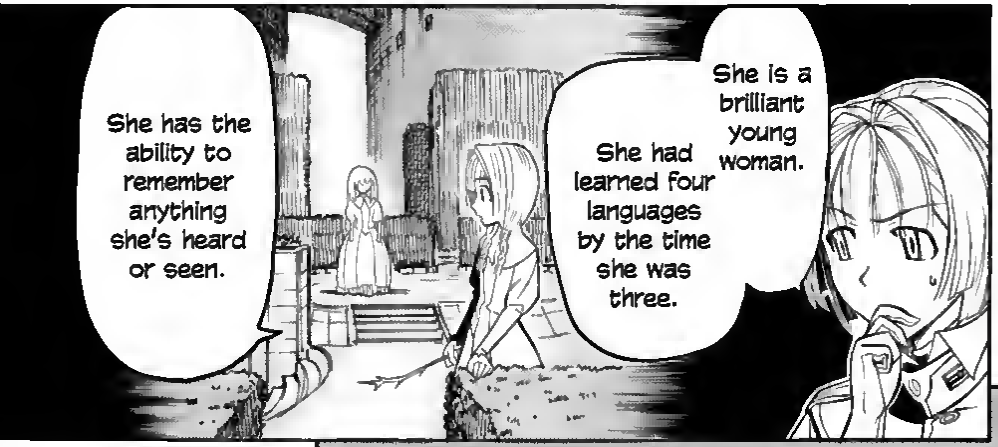
PumpkinScissors

Lodelia Castle:
Château de Raisin du Crepuscule
Is...
...that true?
There is no evidence...
...but most likely.
SNICKER

Section III is...
SNICKER
Alice's troop, isn't it?

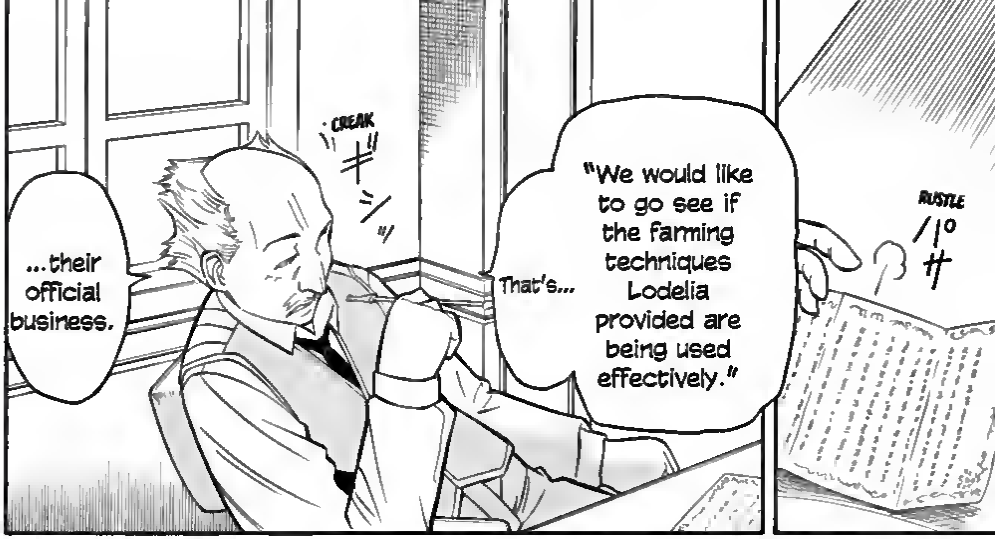
She's arriving by train today.
Princess Septieme is coming!?
SECTION 3rd
CAPTAIN HUNKS


I've only met her a few times due to my great-grandfather's acquaintance.
Second Lieutenant, you're friends with a princess!?
Oraldo might be happy.
Septieme Lodelia! One of the princesses from our neighboring country!
Princess?

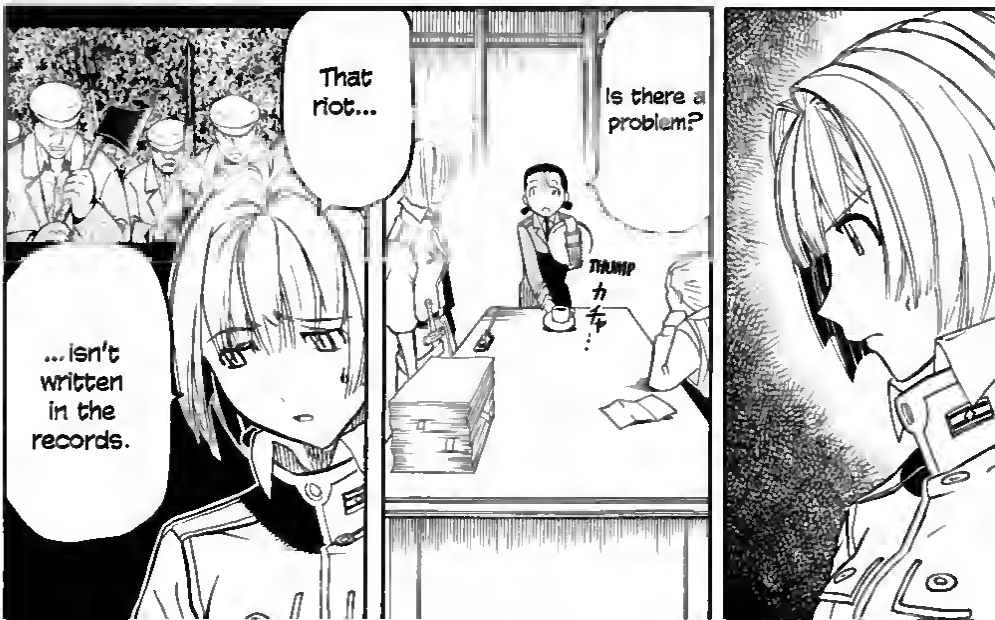

She has the ability to remember anything she's heard or seen.
She had learned four languages by the time she was three.
She is a brilliant young woman.

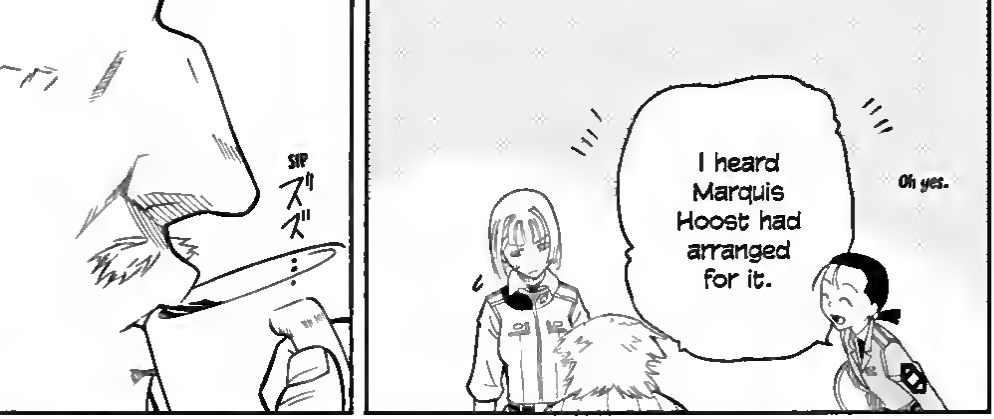
...as if she had just met them yesterday.

Because of her extraordinary memory, she will interact with those she hasn't seen in years...

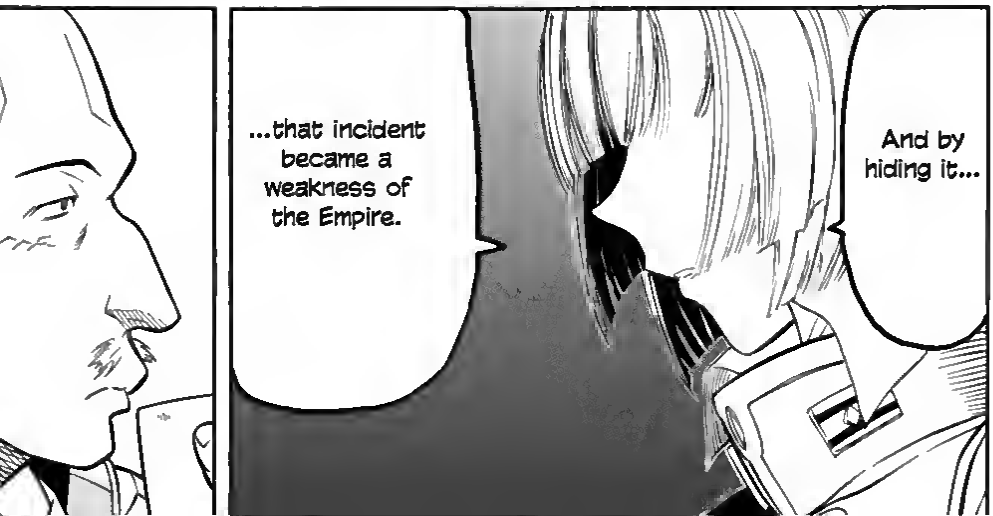

CREAK
...their official business.
That's...
"We would like to go see if the farming techniques Lodelia provided are being used effectively."
RUSTLE

...to retrieve the Royal Guards.
But most likely their real purpose is...


That riot...
...isn't written in the records.
Is there a problem?
THUMP


SIP
ズズ"...
I heard Marquis Hoost had arranged for it.
Oh yes.

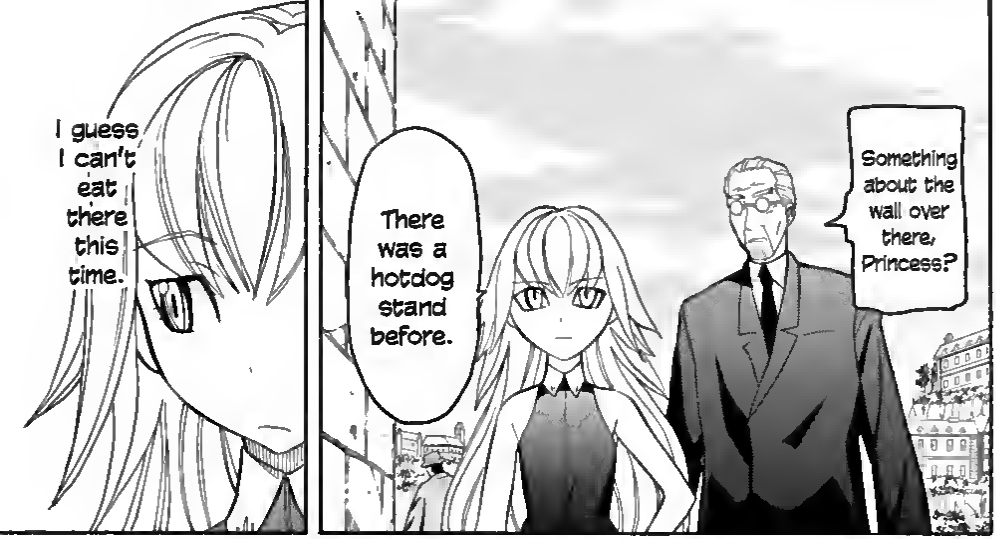
...Section I covered it up to save face.
"Commoners caused a riot, but they were stayed from being executed." Whether that was a good decision or not...
Because of that, Section I couldn't execute them as a warning to all.


...that incident became a weakness of the Empire.
And by hiding it...

You look like you feel responsible for letting them go.
Don't worry. It was Section I's decision to cover it up.
They did calculate how to control the information.
Everyone there wanted a peaceful solution.
But there is one "hole" that we can't cover.
The Royal Guards who are foreigners...
We can't force a gag order on them.
The Royal Guards can freely talk about what happened that night.
And they came to meet those guards...

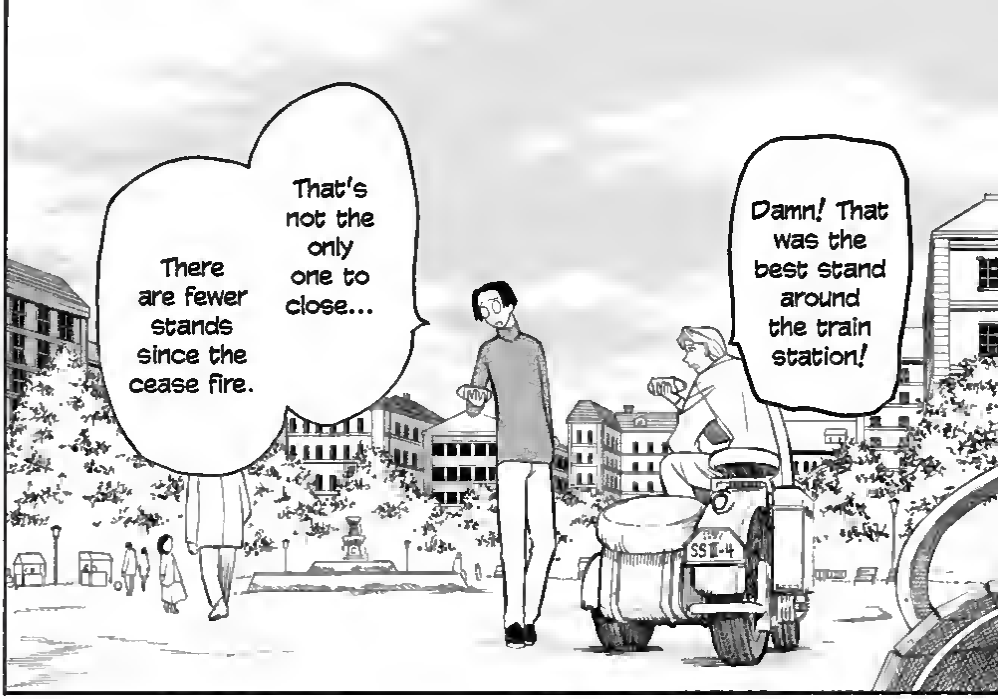
PSSHHHHH
They came to learn the weakness of the Empire!?
Princess
I know.

HMM
I heard it four times already.
This is a secret operation.
We are spying!
I heard that thirteen times.
TROT TROT
To get ahead of your elder brothers and sisters!
We need to get the Empire's weakness no matter what!
Lacker Wurs
HMM


I guess I can't eat there this time.
There was a hotdog stand before.
Something about the wall over there, Princess?

Argh! Enough already!
Princess, I'd like to remind you that...

The black-and-white checkered hotdog stand.
I tried looking, but I couldn't find it.


That's not the only one to close...
There are fewer stands since the cease fire.
Damn! That was the best stand around the train station!
SS II-4

How's the article?
あむ
MUNCH
Things were tax free before.

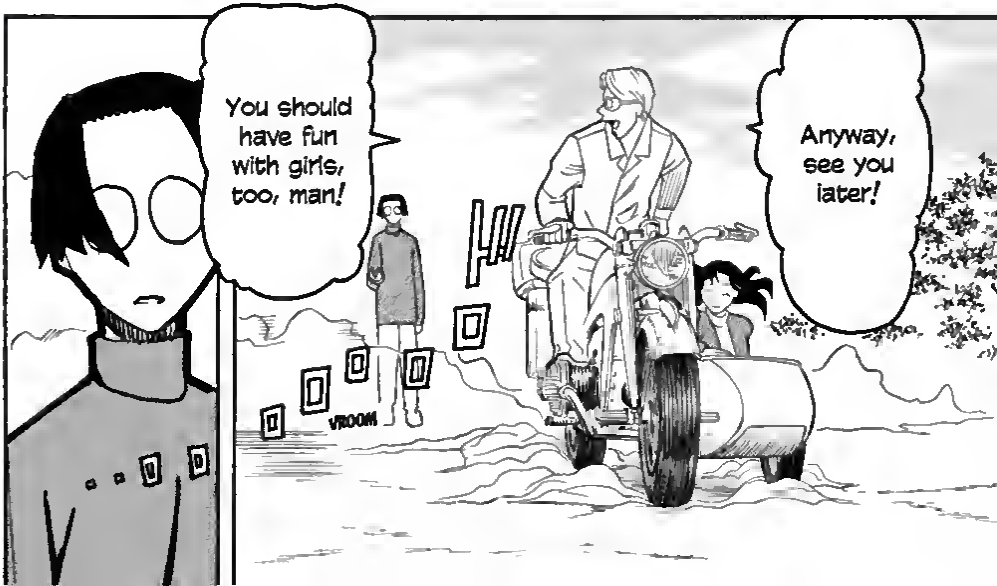
Section I gets their job done.
Surrender
They just wrote about Paulo turning himself in.

Well, we finally got our vacation.
Let's forget about work for once!
That's true.
I hope the corporal is taking care of himself, too.
I'm sure he's taking it easy.

Sorry to keep you waiting! Wow, i've never been on one of these before!
Yeah, soldiers need breaks, too!

i got to know her while you were out getting food.

Oreido?
Oh, thanks.
HAHAHA. You can put your bag here.

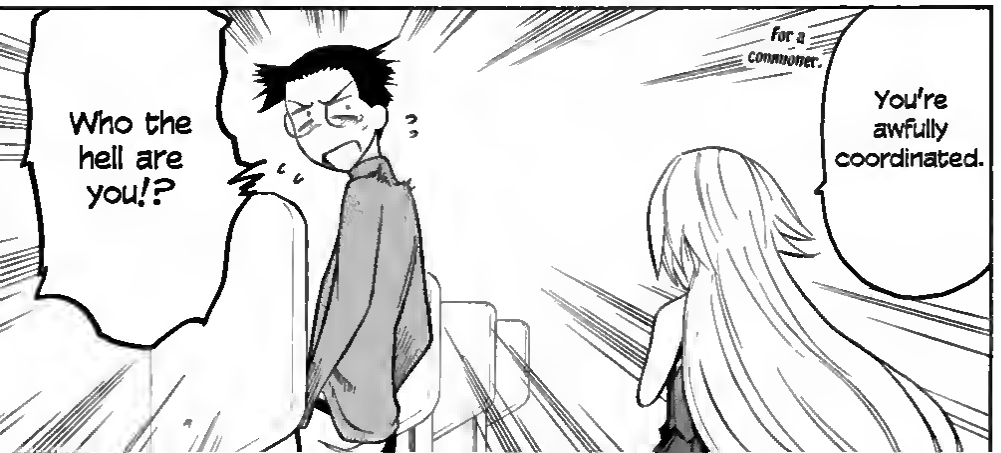

You should have fun with girls, too, man!
VROOM
Anyway, see you later!

Damn, Oreido!
AHHHHHH
AH AHA
AH AHA
Reducing water use, huh?
Like I'm even able to get girls like him.
CREAK
CLUNK
Whoops, I shouldn't think about work today.
We use the water at the military base freely.
SNEAK

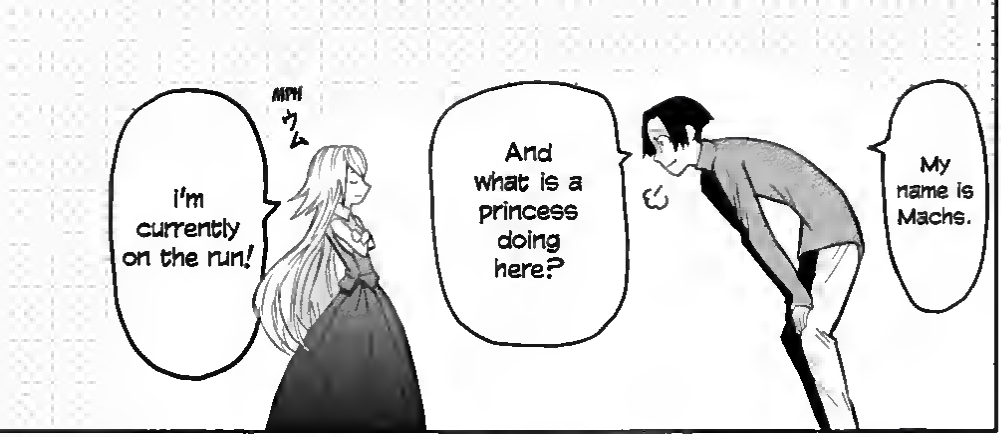
This was an outhouse for the commoners.
Oh.
FLOAT

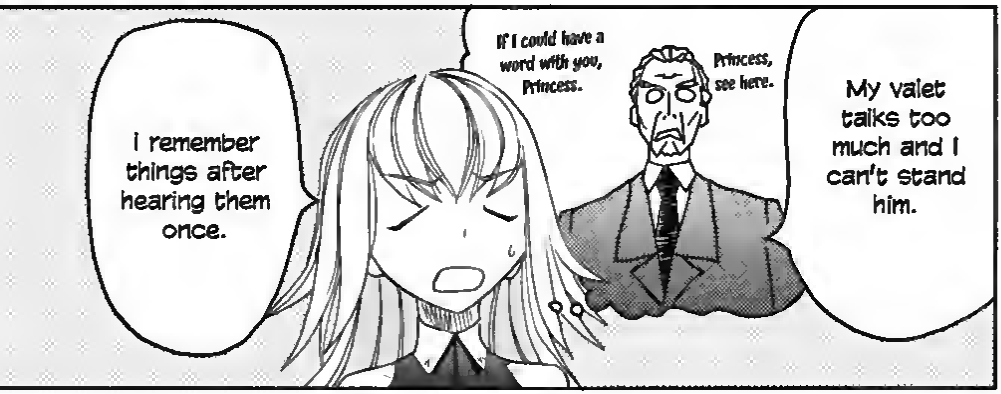
As you were.
I'm not interested in the commoners' physiology.

Hmm

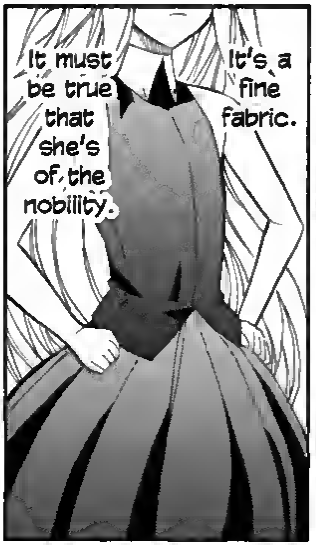

You're awfully coordinated.
For a commoner.
Who the hell are you!?

Who, you say?
I don't have to name myself to a commoner...
SNICKER
...but I'll humor you!
My name is Septieme!
One of the seven children of the Lodelia Kingdom vying to inherit the throne!
TADAH
You don't believe me, do you!?
Okay, okay.
Oh good. The sink has water.
SPLASH

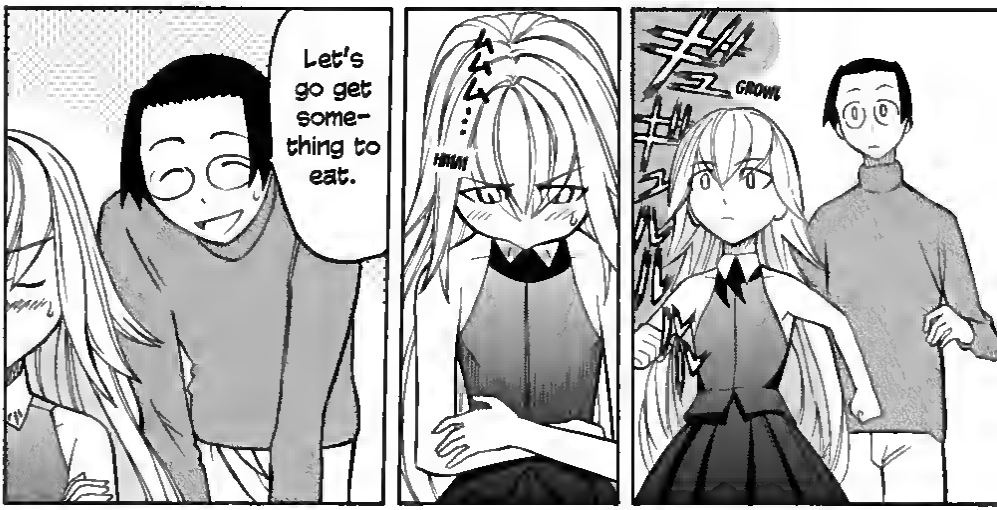

MPH
I'm currently on the run!
And what is a princess doing here?
My name is Machs.


I remember things after hearing them once.
If I could have a word with you, Princess.
Princess, see here.
My valet talks too much and I can't stand him.

Well, let's get out of here first.
BUZZ
A pervert?
Yeah.
He brought a child in here?

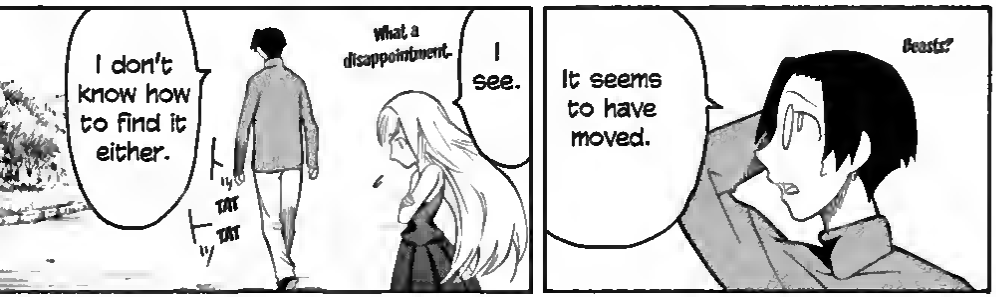

It must be true that she's of the nobility.
It's a fine fabric.

I guess I'll take her to the police.
I'm sure your valet is worried about you.
TROT
TROT
TROT
Forget about him!
Plus...


Let's go get some-thing to eat.
HMM
GROWL

The one with a black-and-white checkered roof?
...I don't think a hotdog stand is proper for a princess.
But...
!

Lecker Wurst!
...there was a delicious smell coming out of it.
And I'm rather interested in eating in the streets with commoners like beasts.
Last time I was here...
You know about it?

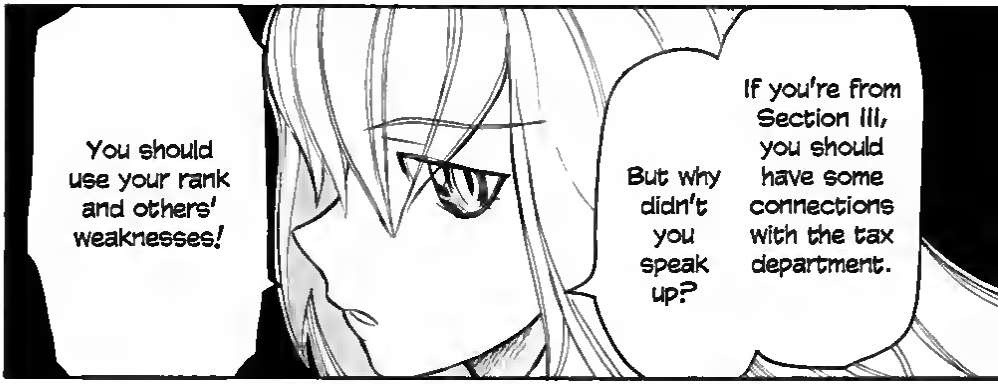

I don't know how to find it either.
TAT
TAT
What a disappointment.
I see.
It seems to have moved.
Beasts?

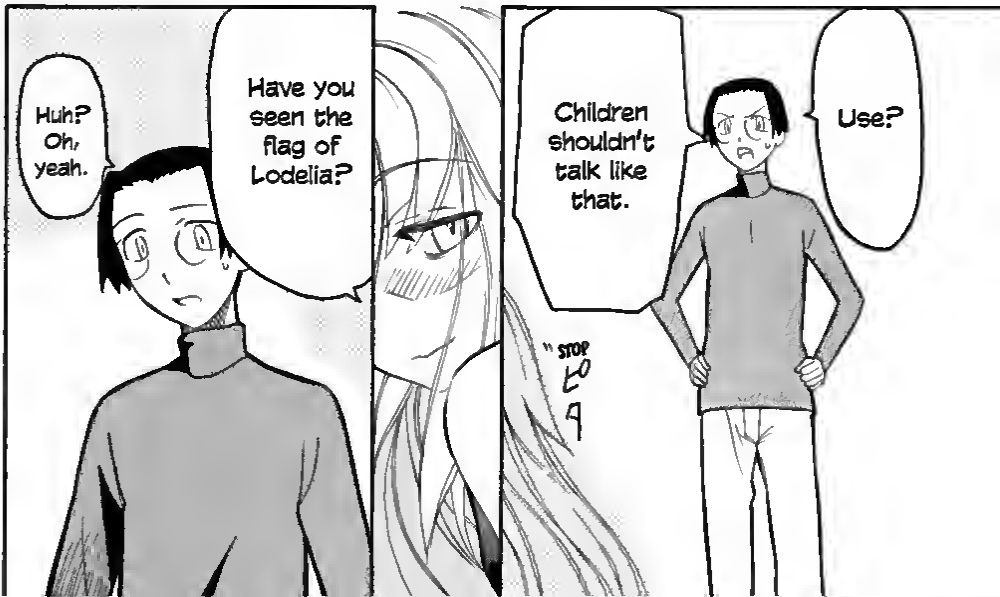
...you must be a soldier, Machs.
From the way you walk...
TAT
TAT

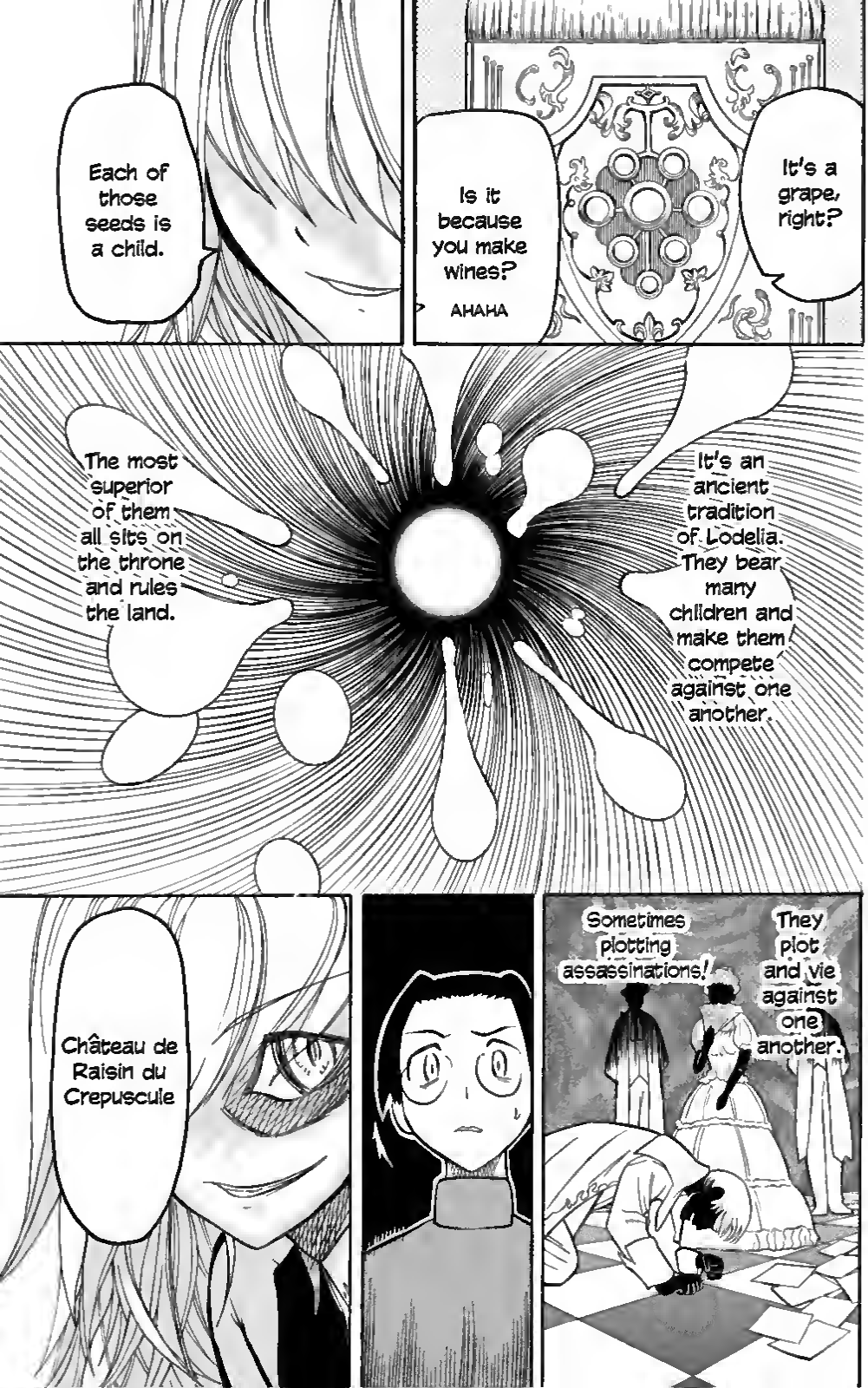
We cannot show the list to non-government personnel.
A list of businesses in the train station square?
Imperial Central County Tax Office
I see.
I heard that military personnel have a lot of power in the government of this country.
FLIP
Listen. Machs here is a soldier and an officer at that.
Oh yes, he has clearance.
Oh, hello.
Warrant Officer!
Warrant Officer Machs, isn't it?

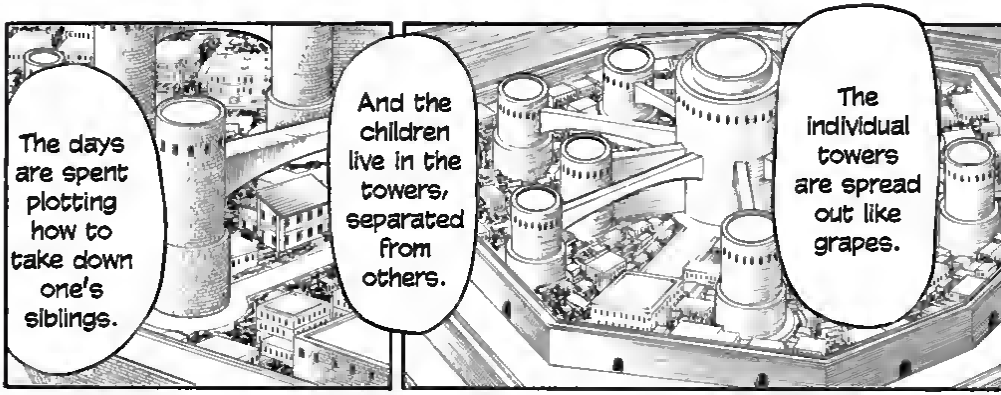
He is Warrant Officer Machs from State Section III.
We share information with each other for tax collection purposes.
A hotdog stand?
That area rotates through heavily...
We've had more than four hundred applications in the past.
March 17th at 2:20pm three years ago!
Location is behind the west building!
Look for an application from that exact time.
That should be easy.

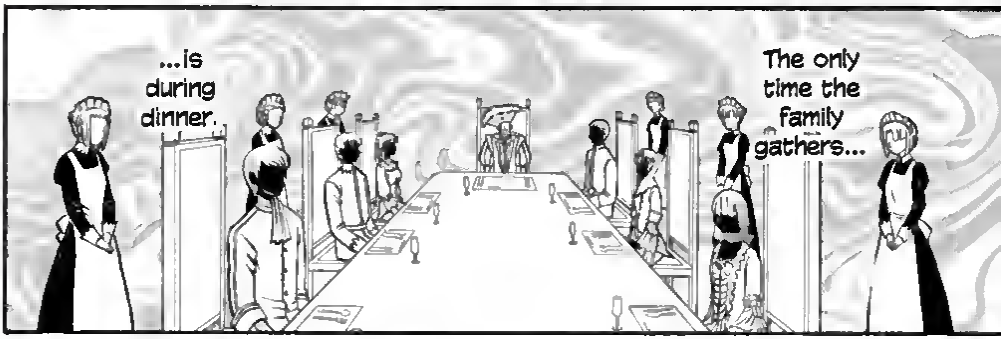
A hard world...
"License revoked due to failure of tax payment"...
You sure have a good memory. I'm surprised!
TROT
I was going to say the same thing to you.


If you're from Section III, you should have some connections with the tax department.
But why didn't you speak up?
You should use your rank and others' weaknesses!


Use?
Children shouldn't talk like that.
STOP
Have you seen the flag of Lodelia?
Huh? Oh, yeah.


Each of those seeds is a child.
Is it because you make wines?
AHAHA
It's a grape, right?
The most superior of them all sits on the throne and rules the land.
It's an ancient tradition of Lodelia. They bear many children and make them compete against one another.
Château de Raisin du Crepuscule
Sometimes plotting assassinations!
They plot and vie against one another.


The days are spent plotting how to take down one's siblings.
And the children live in the towers, separated from others.
The individual towers are spread out like grapes.

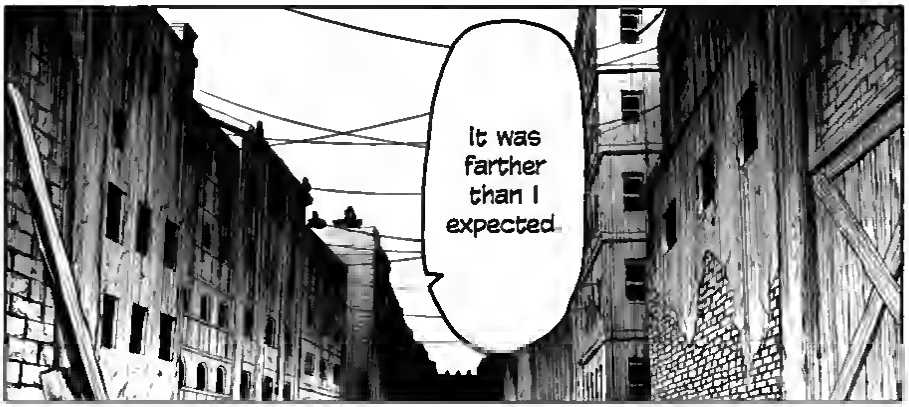

...is during dinner.
The only time the family gathers...

...on hand.
With a poison tester...

To use or to be used.
That providence is true for the royals as well as commoners!
Let's go, Machs.
.....
Go where?
There was an address for the owner on that list.
You're gonna go there?
Yes!
No one escapes my grasp!
She's trying to liven up the mood.

Her emotions are child-like.
But her way of thinking is strict.
I get it.

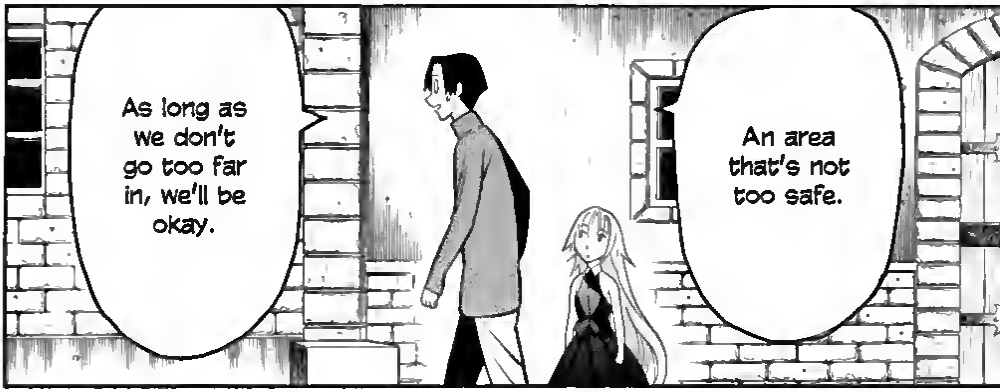
...of the second lieutenant.
She reminds me a little...


It was farther than I expected

What a dismal place.

.....
The travel cost wasn't cheap either.

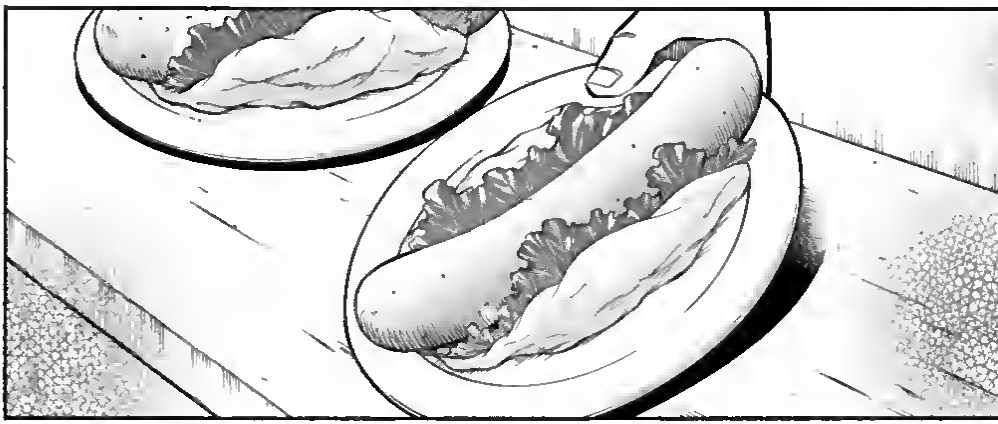
Well, umm...
Area Zero?
This area is close to Area Zero, so...

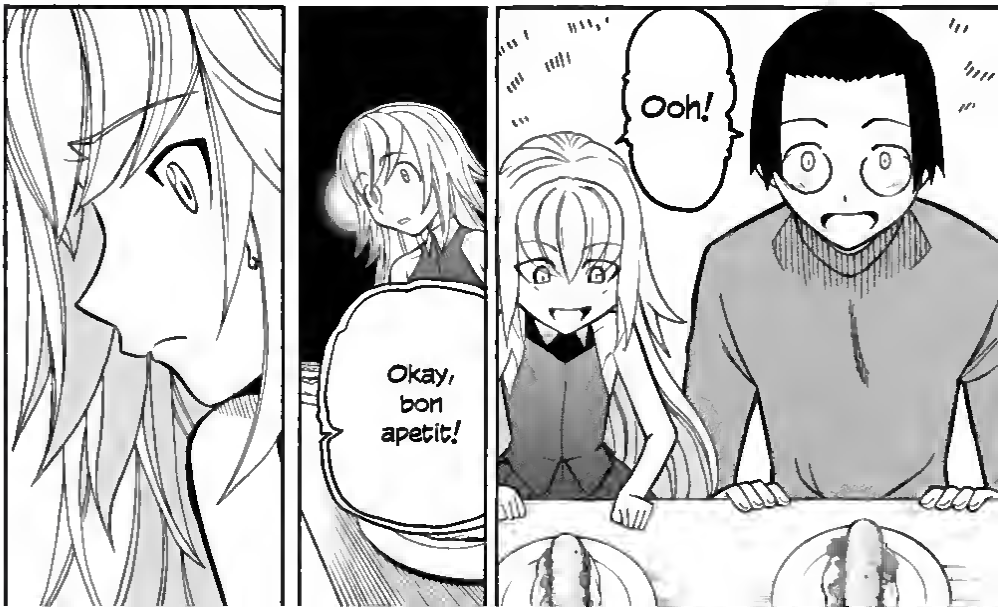

As long as we don't go too far in, we'll be okay.
An area that's not too safe.

This smoky smell...
Hmm?
スッスン
SNIFF
ふ～ん…
HMM

PWP
ダダダ
DASH
ダダダ
Lecker
You came all the way from the station?
SIZZLE
ウウウウ
We found it!

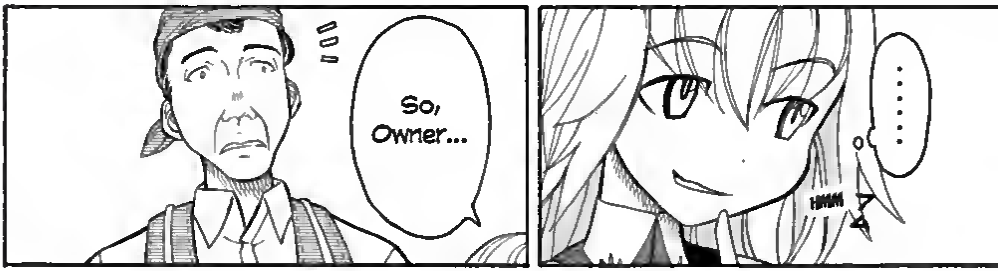
Well, that makes me a happy man. Here you go!




Okay, bon apetit!
Ooh!

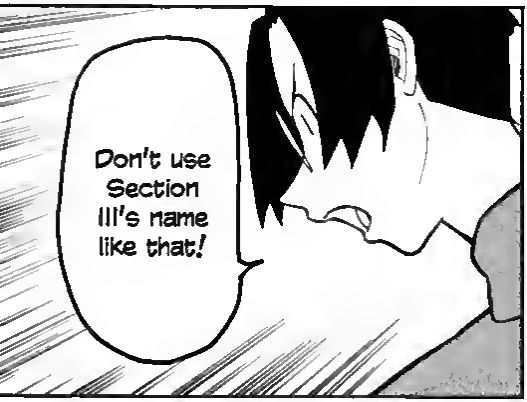
With a poison tester on hand...
Umm...
You're not going to eat?
Don't worry! It's delicious.
もぐもぐ
MUNCH
Whoa!
MUNCH

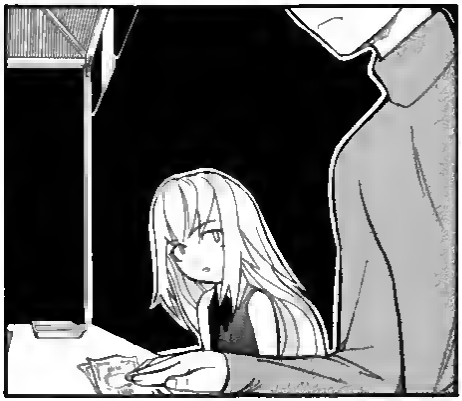
Payday isn't coming up yet...
Unrefined, but delicious!


So, Owner...
.....
HMM

Warrant Officer Machs here is from Section III.
Have you paid your taxes yet?
I heard that your license was revoked.

So he can collect taxes, and of course make an arrest for illegal businesses.
So how about it?
We say that you treated us to this meal and...

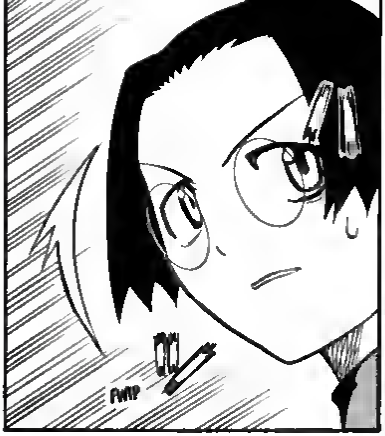

Don't use Section III's name like that!



It's no fun living like that, right!?
Using people's weak-nesses!
Wh-!? I was thinking about you!

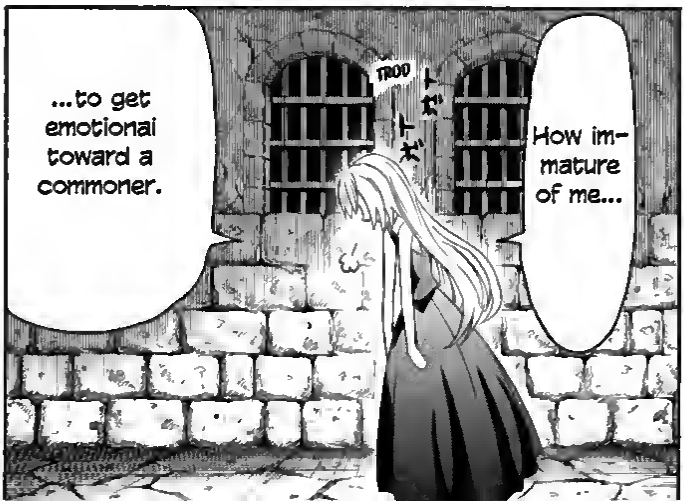
I'm not having fun...
GRIP
If you show your weakness, you won't live.
On my fifth birthday...
...my food was poisoned.
By my own brothers and sisters!
When you're unguarded, you'll die.
That's what they taught me.

This head of mine won't forget anything!
I can't forget even if I want to...
SLAP
Don't touch me!
I can't help myself!
I remember during every meal.
Dammit...
GAIP
くっ…
Septieme!


PANT

The direction the little girl headed is...
Umm...

Area Zero!


...to get emotional toward a commoner.
TROD
How immature of me...

STEP

GLANCE
チラ…
Hmm?
HESITATE
(;ω;)…
We'll have a feast tonight.
ケッケッケッ
HE HE HE
Oh ho. Her clothes and hair look expensive.

I'm a princess of the Lodelia Royal Family. This will cause a diplomatic problem!
Ugh.
THUD
I have no choice then...
They're too low to know the power of the royals.
You'll sell for an even higher price then.
SNICKER
My escort is a soldier.
You ought to be scared of him.

!
A soldier wouldn't come here!
HYAK
HYAK
HYAK

We were abandoned by the Empire. This area hasn't been districted.
We don't have a name or number!
The residents don't have rights and there's no law to protect us.
Which means...

...if we kill a soldier here, we don't get prosecuted. Get it?
FLIP
Area Zero isn't Zero Avenue.
It's a small country of its own.

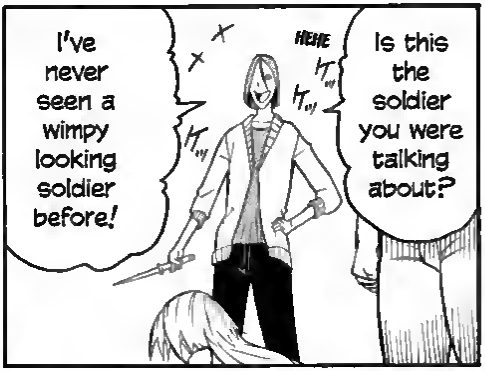
That's what we call this place.
O-Land.
Mache!
Who's gonna save you in our land?
HNUK
HNUK
THUNK

Machs…
Are you okay!?
I can't.
Hurry!
Get up and run!
My legs won't hold me up.
I'm sorry.
A soldier won't come here!
I'm sorry.
My goodness…

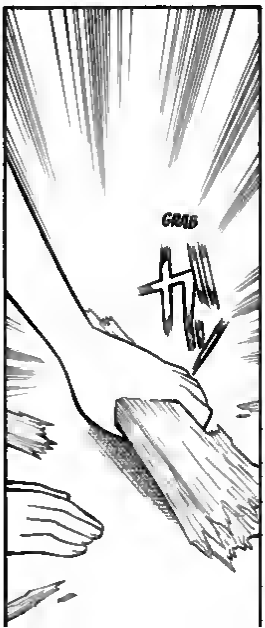
GASP
...a princess.
You're really like...
POW
Machs!
FLINCH
Machs!
THUD

SLIDE
Are you all right!?
Machs!

Machs...
...is no wimp!


I've never seen a wimpy looking soldier before!
HEHE
Is this the soldier you were talking about?

STEP


GRAB

Yeah right!
WHOOSH

CRACK
POW
Huh?
DROOP
WHOOSH
What?
POW
THUD

DUCK
One.
MUMBLE
1, 2, 3.
1, 2, 3.
If he's a soldier...
Shoot...!
Damn you!
...he knows martial arts!
FLING
Three.
Two.
BAM
Septieme!
Argh.
THUD
Ugh.

SST
Let's go!
C'mon.
SQUEEZ
...princess?
A real...
Get up already.
They're heading over soon.
SECTION 3rd
CAPTAIN HUNKS
It almost would have been a diplomatic issue.
Yeah.

Pardon us.
I know.
Princess, you need to find the weakness of the Empire.
FLUFF
WOW

We would like you to return the Royal Guards there.
I will be blunt.

FLINCH
...It is disrespectful to the Royal Guard Troop as well as Lodelia Kingdom.
If they are held under arrest for no reason...

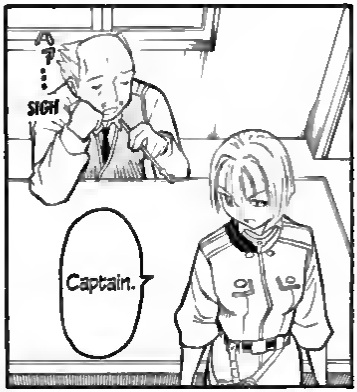
With all due respect...

Why won't you answer the princess!?

.....

Long time no see, Alice L. Malvin.
We'll hear your explanation now.

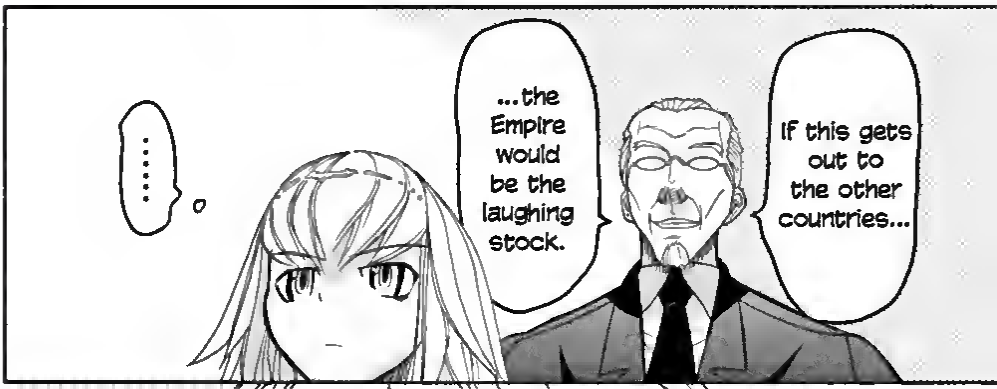
They'll find out sooner or later.
Do as you wish.

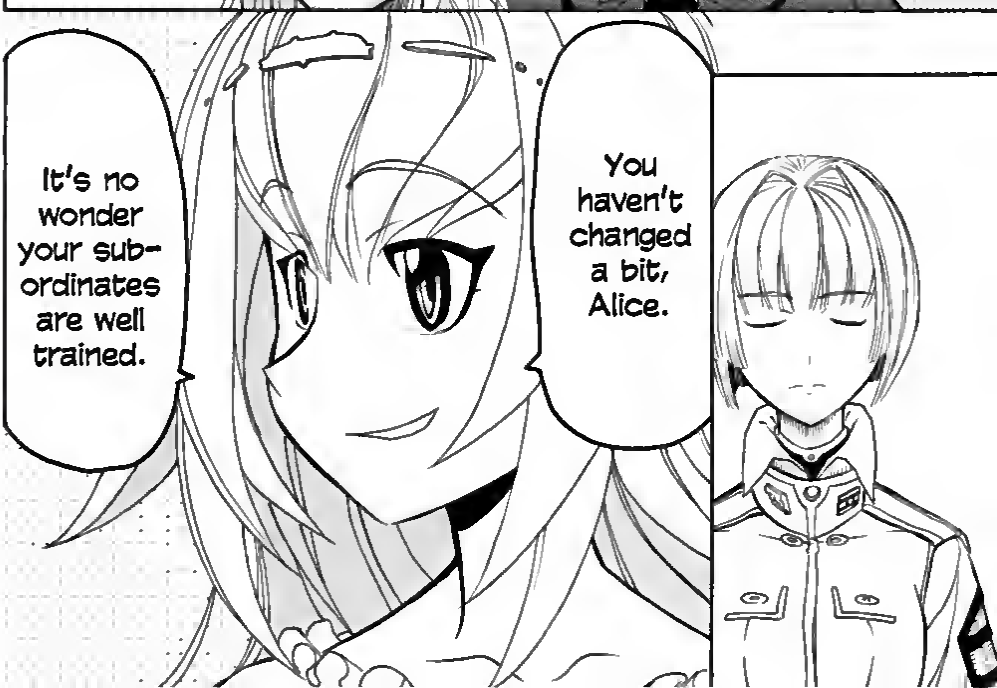

SIGH
Captain.

When Lord Paulo surrendered...
...there was a riot caused by the commoners toward the nobility.
The Empire has chosen to conceal the incident for public safety.
And to prevent any leaks, we have been holding the guards.

GRIN
So you are causing us an inconvenience to hide your problems?
I see.

She said it...


If this gets out to the other countries...
...the Empire would be the laughing stock.
.....

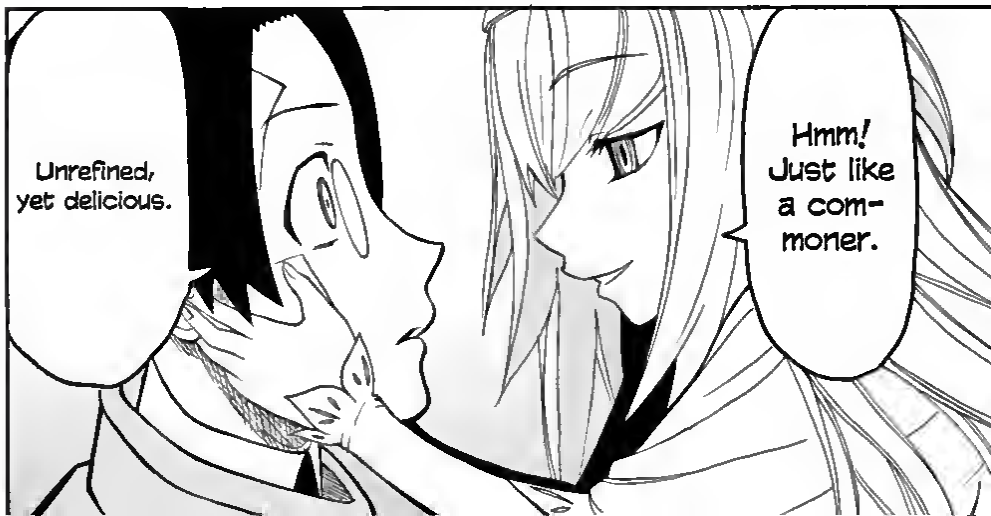

You haven't changed a bit, Alice.
It's no wonder your sub-ordinates are well trained.

STAND
You two! I'm proud that you protected the Lord during the unrest.
!

This incident shall stay close to my heart.
Captain Hunks! I'll swear upon my name.

SNICKER
Well, we can start with the information department's...
I'll take this.

And what can we do in return?
I'll be grateful for that.


Hmm! Just like a commoner.
Unrefined, yet delicious.

Whenever I visit the Empire...
...I ask that the warrant officer be assigned to escort me.
The Empire saves face in exchange...
...for a subordinate.
You made a very good trade.
Let's go!
How long are you going to stand like that?
TROT
TROT

Why...
...are you still upset?
CHUG
CHUG
Why don't you come here?
You're my guard after all.

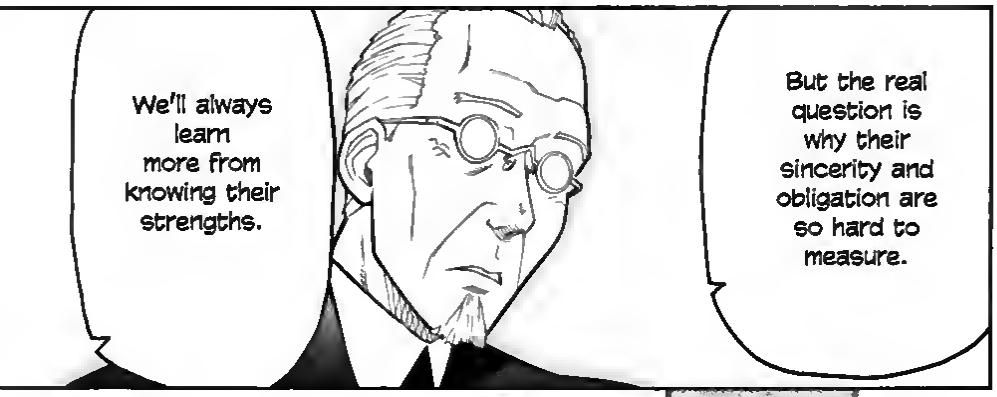
You...

CHUG
CHUG
CHUG
CHUG
HMPH

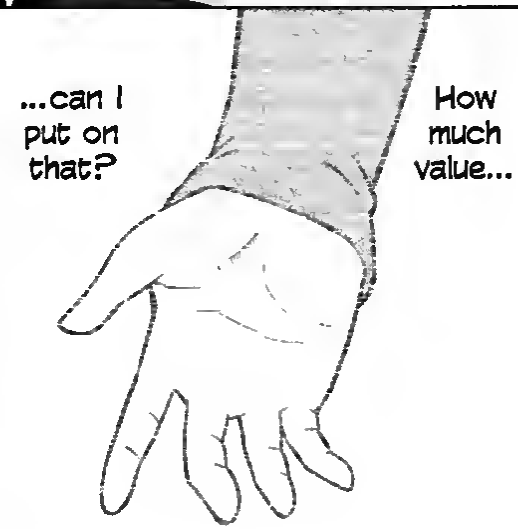
RATTLE
Listen

You've become soft.
You cannot find their weaknesses anymore.

It doesn't matter, though; you can't gain anything from finding them!
CHUG CHUG CHUG
CHUG CHUG CHUG
it's easy to find their weaknesses.


We'll always learn more from knowing their strengths.
But the real question is why their sincerity and obligation are so hard to measure.

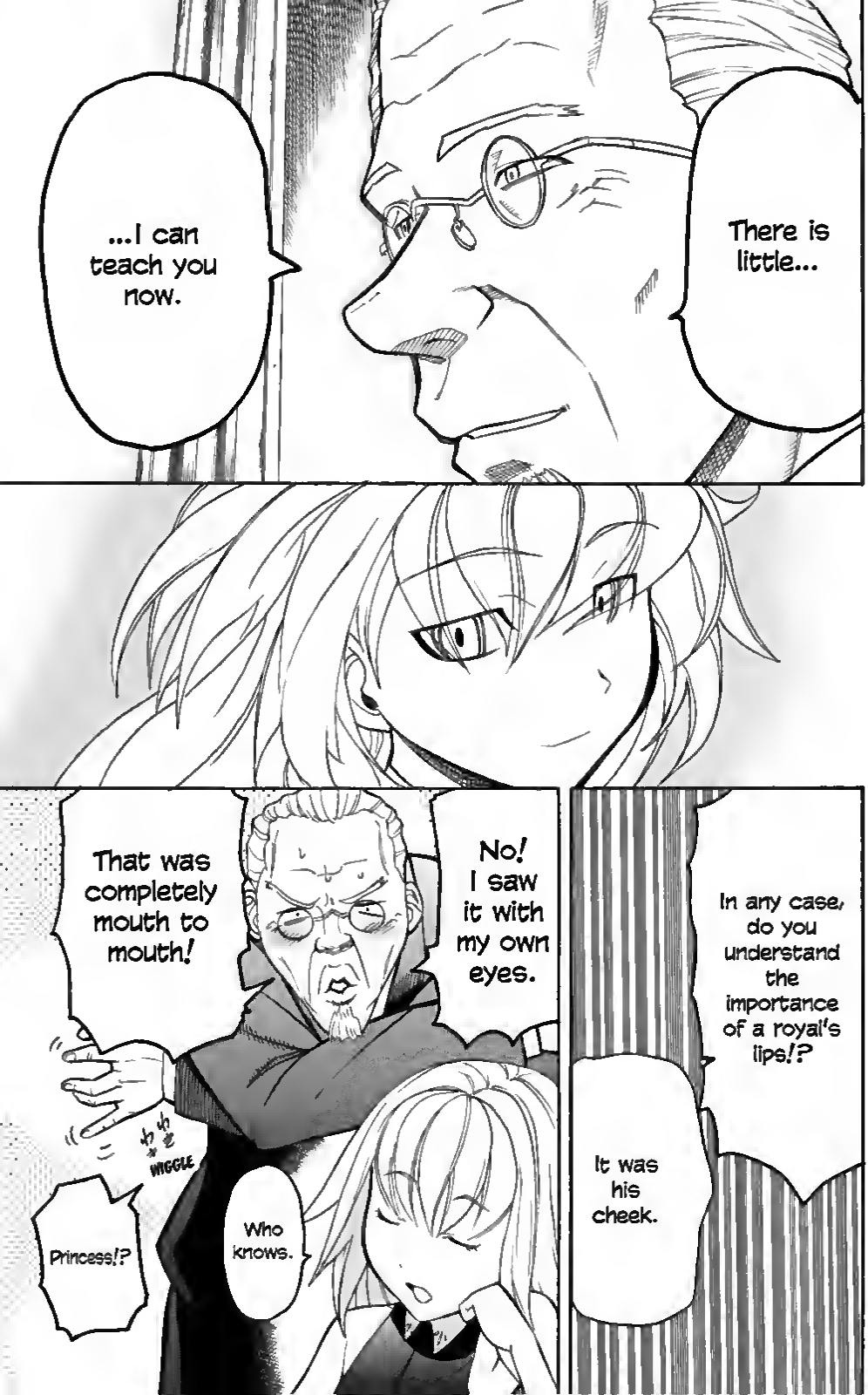
SST
す…

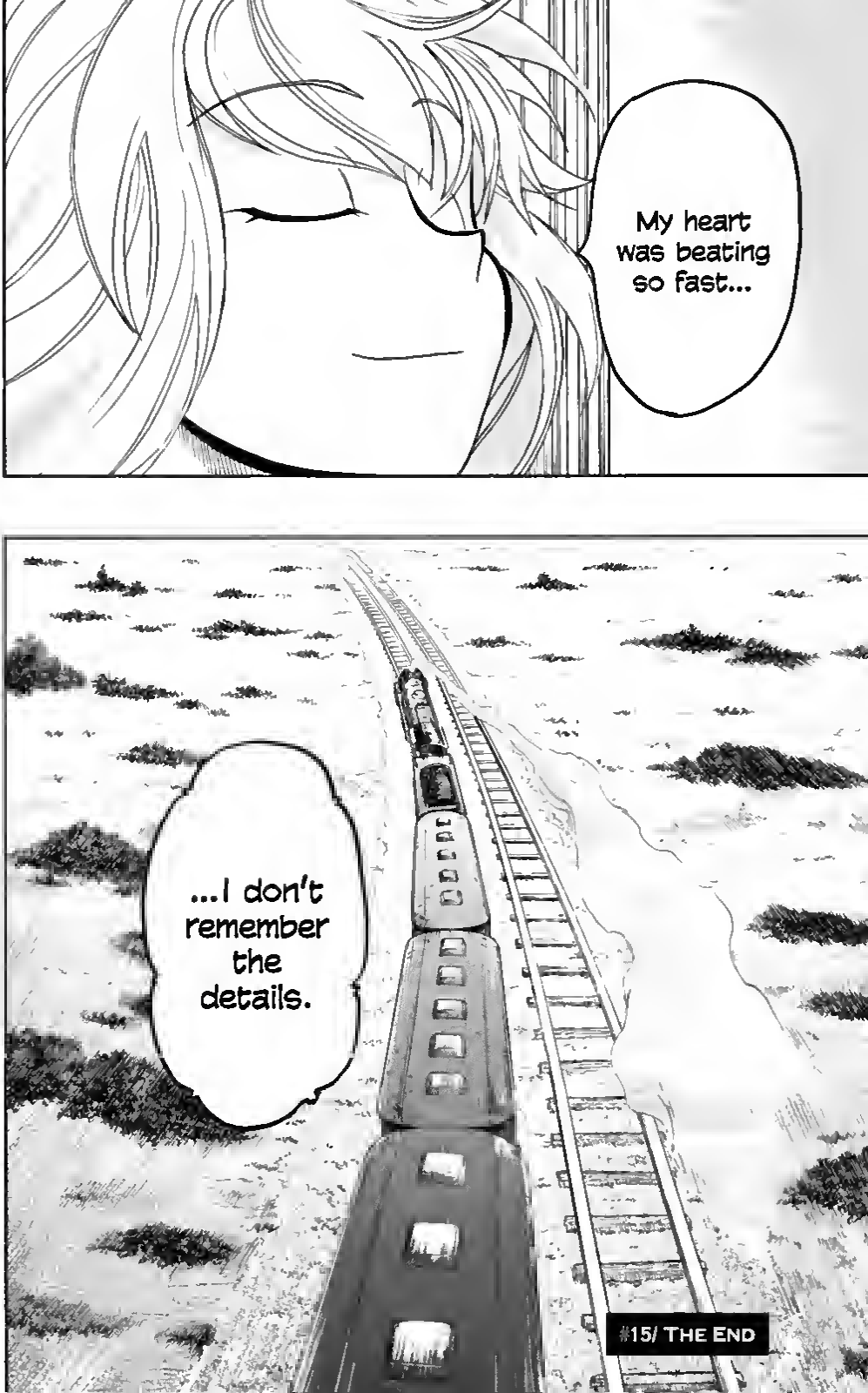

...can I put on that?
How much value...

"An infinite value can be gained."
I think it's important to create relationships like that for my future reign.

How sad.

...to gain their sympathy?
And you think I'm soft...

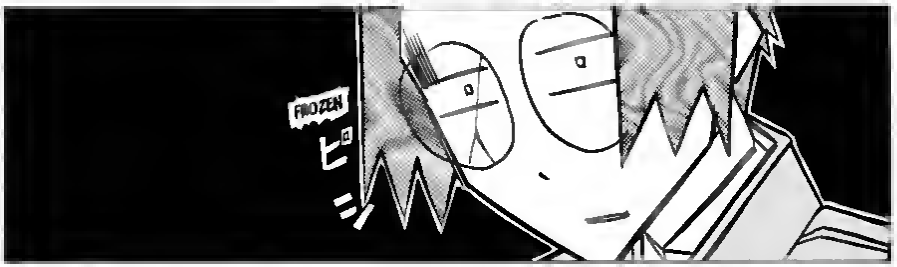

There is little...
...I can teach you now.
In any case, do you understand the importance of a royal's lips!?
It was his cheek.
No! I saw it with my own eyes.
That was completely mouth to mouth!
WIGGLE
Who knows.
Princess!?


My heart was beating so fast...
...I don't remember the details.
#15/ THE END

PumpkinScissors

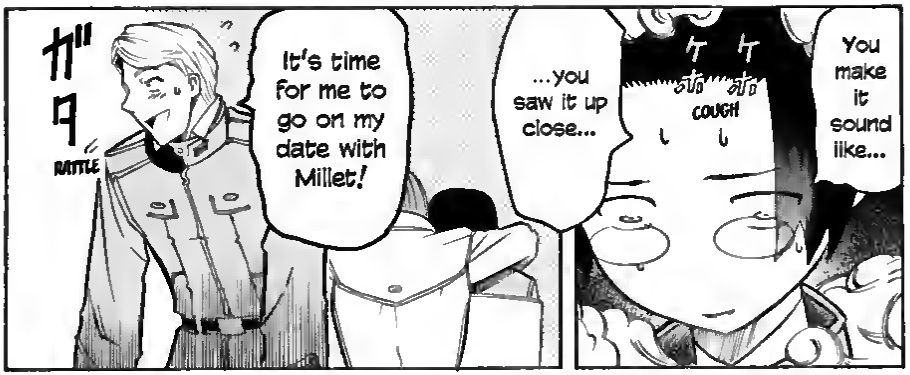
Interval

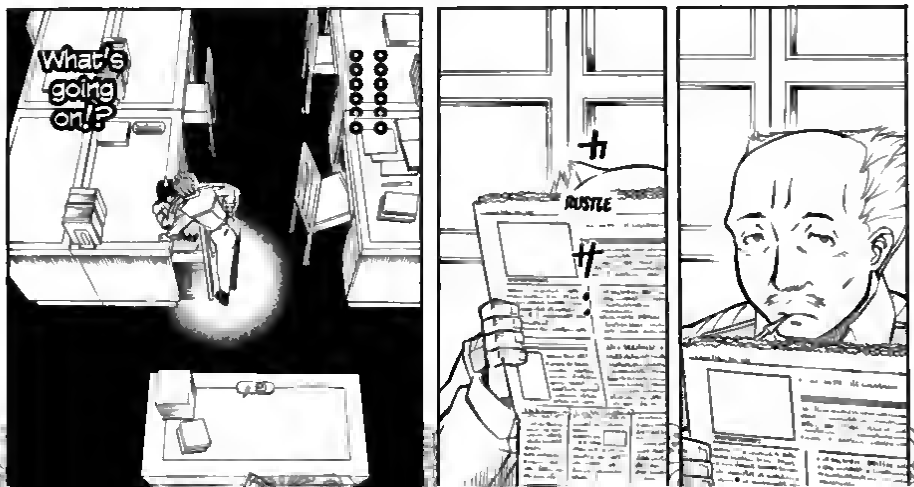
I heard, Machs...
...that you kissed a girl.


FROZEN

I see...
I should take Merc for a walk!
RATTLE
W-Who did you hear that from?

...a French kiss?
3.
WHOOSH
Of all things...


RATTLE
It's time for me to go on my date with Millet!
...you saw it up close...
COUGH
You make it sound like...


What's going on!?
RUSTLE

くす…
GRIN
Just kidding! Sorry to have bothered you.
First Lieutenant Webner?
Yo, Machs!

Can you...
...come with us for a bit?
Huh?
You need help with maintenance?
Aw geez.
RATTLE
First Lieutenant was here earlier... huh?
You guys are acting funny...
DRAG

And what happened after that...
...Warrant Officer Machs didn't say a word.
He's gonna die.
Warrant Officer Oreldo said, "He needs to learn his place before knowing a woman."

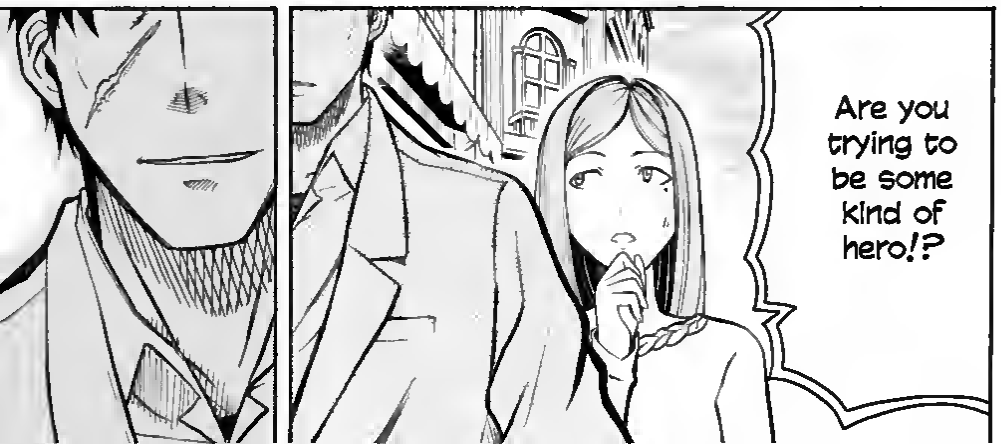
NEXT!

PumpkinScissors

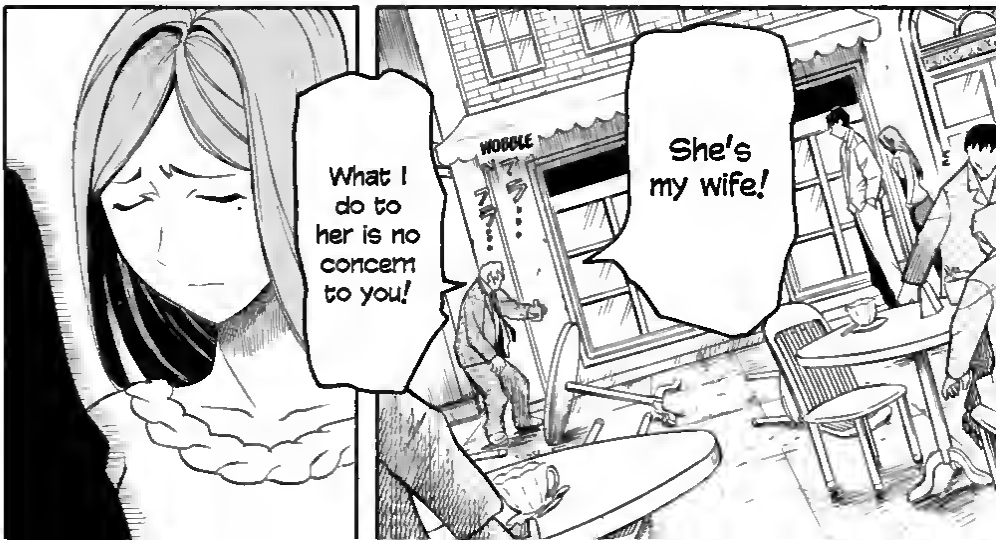
CRASH

HIC
Who the hell are you!?

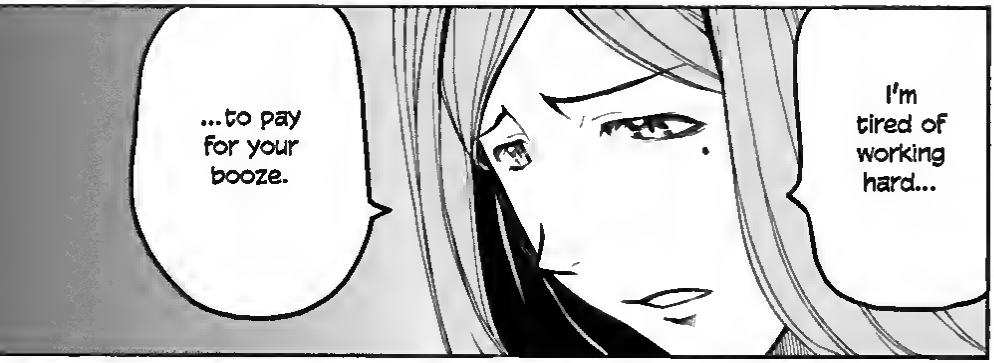
BUZZ
BUZZ
EEK!
Ugh

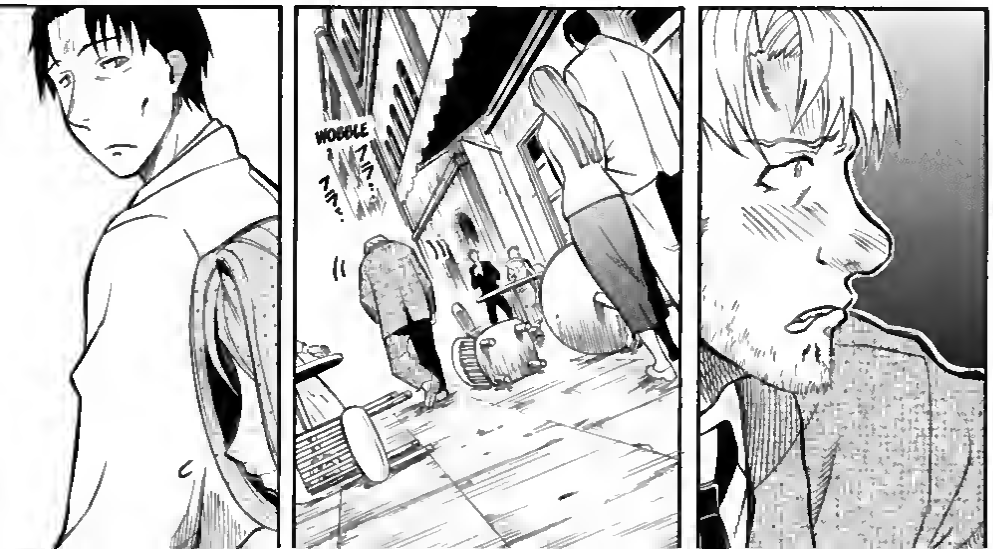

Are you trying to be some kind of hero!?

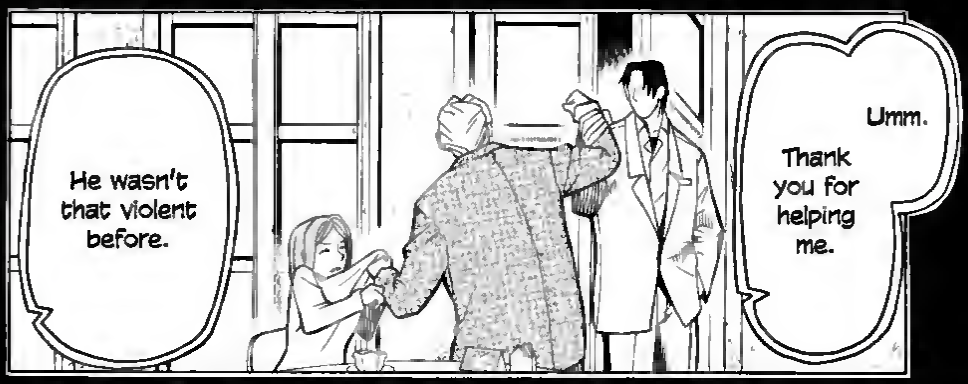
No.
I'm just a secret lover.
Episode 16 Sheath of a Flower

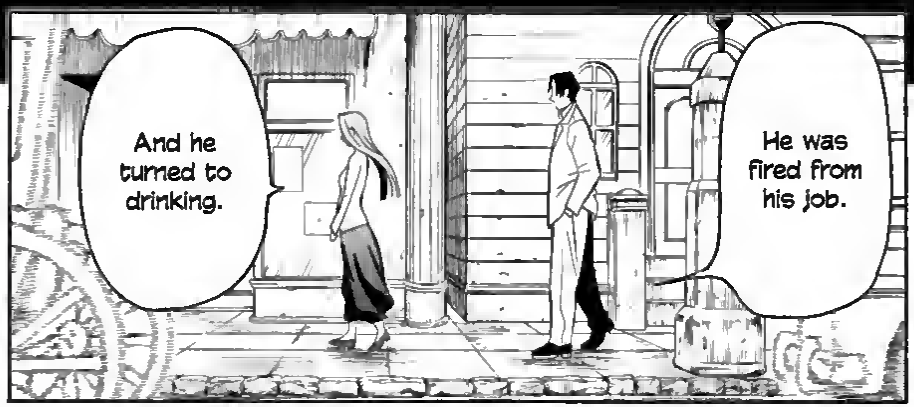

She's my wife!
WOOOLE
What I do to her is no concern to you!

I'm no longer your wife.
Enough already!


...to pay for your booze.
I'm tired of working hard...


WOBBLE
フラ…
フラ…


He wasn't that violent before.
Umm. Thank you for helping me.

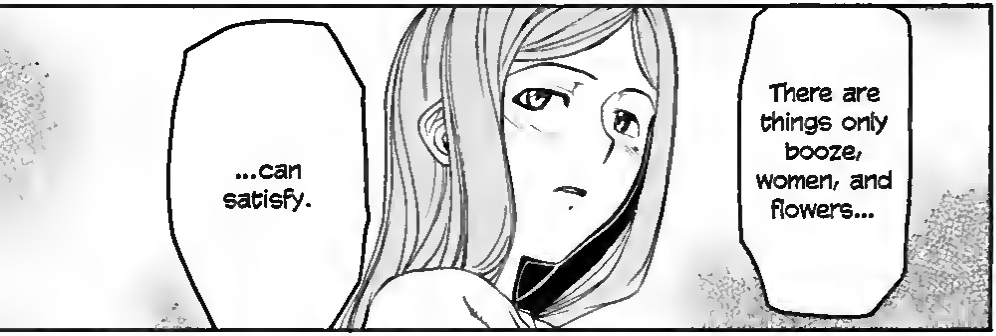

And he turned to drinking.
He was fired from his job.

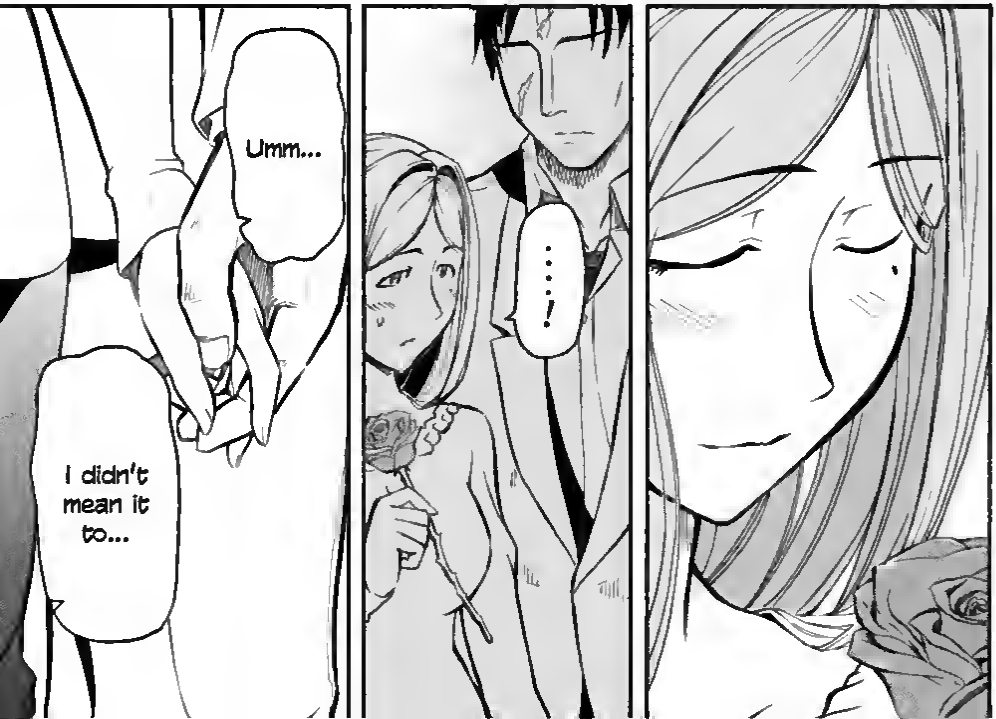
Let go of me, you dogs!
There are more street protests lately.
...stand up!
We should...

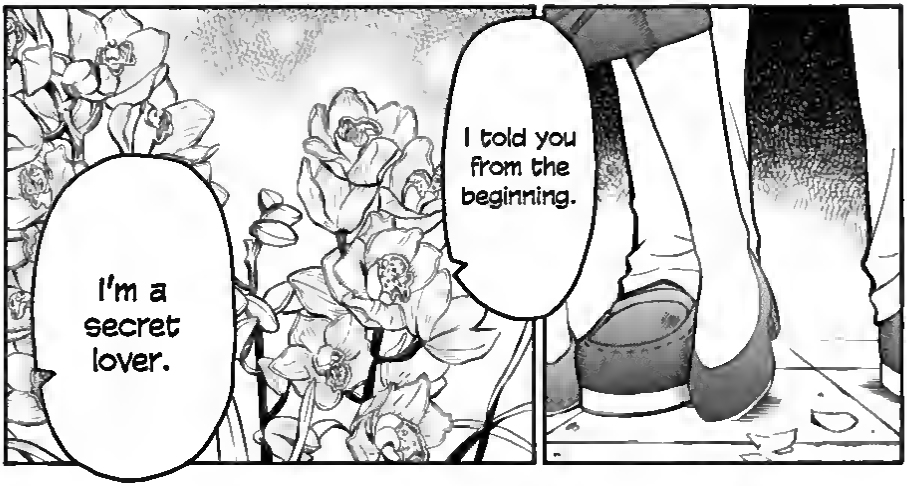
Blumenbeet
UNLOCK
ガチャガチャ
Thank you for walking me home.
Would you like some herbal tea?
LAUGH
フフ…
Oh. You're a florist?
Yeah, at least until I'm out of business, too.

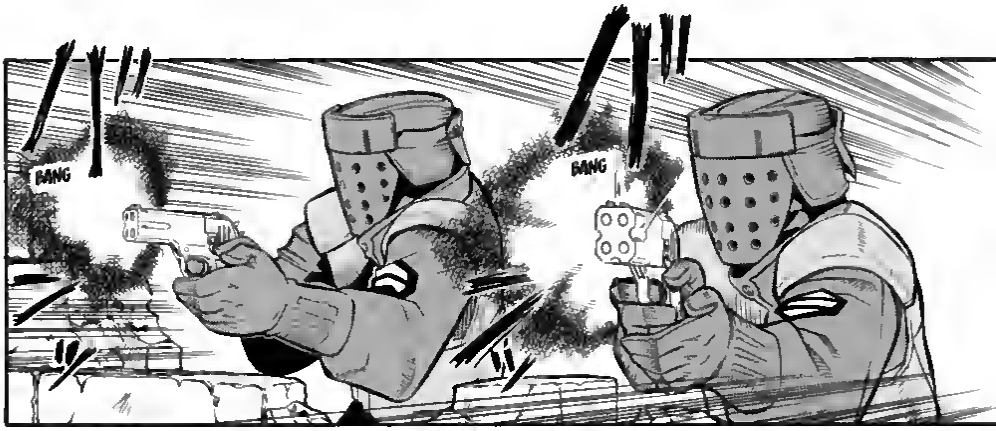
They don't have the luxury to buy flowers.
Most people can hardly get food on their tables.
...When you want to attract a woman.
Sometimes there are moments...
That kind of feeling has nothing to do with whether you have money or not.
Same goes for your husband.
Even though he has no money, he can find ways to pay for booze.

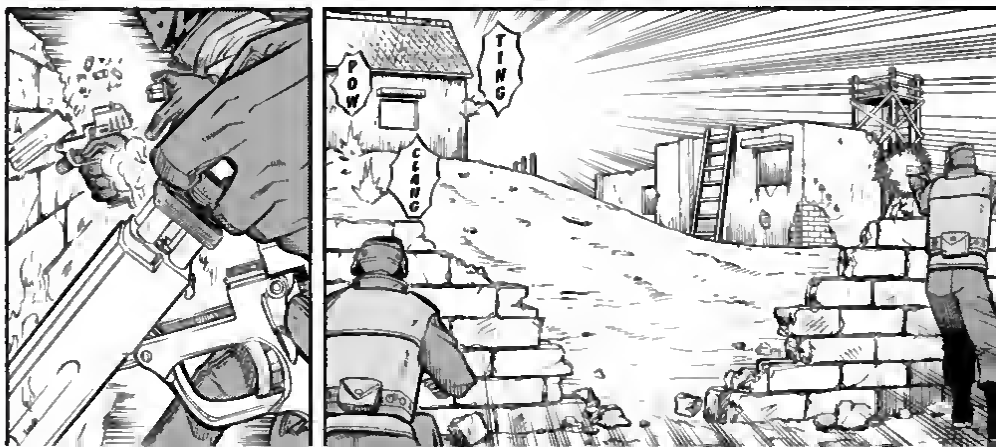
Necessary things in life...
...aren't only to satisfy your stomach.


There are things only booze, women, and flowers...
...can satisfy.


Umm...
I didn't mean it to...
.....!


I told you from the beginning.
I'm a secret lover.


BANG
BANG


POW
CLANG
TING

Shut up already!
Damnit!
CRASH
Shoot!
THUD
Wait!
.....!!
I surren...
Ugh.
SWING
THUD

Training session over!
WHEW
WHISTLE
STOP

I thought she was gonna kill me.
Francesca is getting wild these days.
One guy had both collarbones broken last week.

The Water Department incident!
Isn't it that incident?
My vice captain is injured.
I'm so upset.
うねうね
WIGGLE
ね
WIGGLE
Aaah!
H-Hey! We're still changing!
EEK
CLUNK
CLUNK
ガッポ
Your collarbone.
Do you prefer right or left?

I heard that the one who beat the vice captain was a woman.
A noble-woman at that.
WHISPER
Why don't they have a female locker room in our division?
WHISPER
They didn't expect a woman would pass the exam for Claymore One.
No wonder vice captain lost.
That's a monster.
A big scar on her face.
Taller than me.
More than two and a half meters tall.
Vice captain didn't lose to anyone!
SILENCE
STEP BACK
BAM

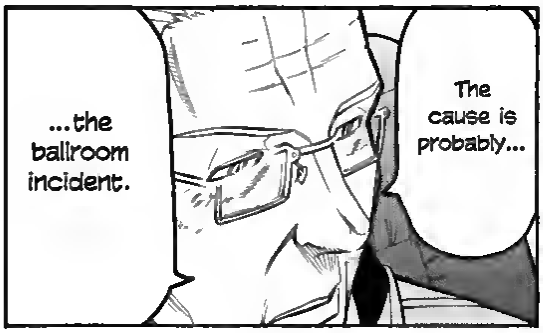
AHAHA
S-
So, where's the captain?
BAM
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
ズカ
ズカ
ズカ

He was called by the section leader.
I think there's a new mission coming up soon.

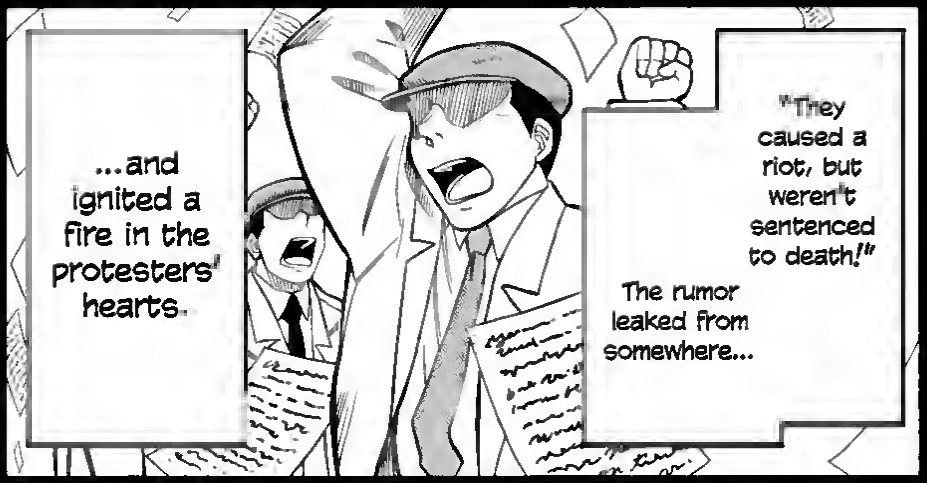
Red Cap?
SECTION 1st
MAJOR CONNERY

There has been an increase in arrests of anti-government protesters.
Many of those are members of Red Cap...
...an organization calling themselves that.

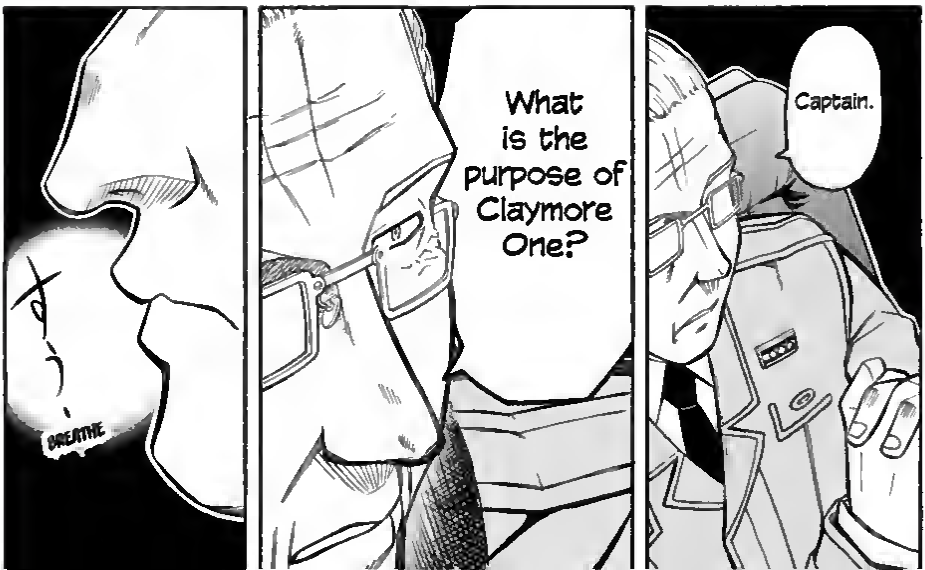
Their activities are small...
...but their numbers are increasing!


The cause is probably...
...the ballroom incident.

CREAK


...and ignited a fire in the protesters' hearts.
"They caused a riot, but weren't sentenced to death!"
The rumor leaked from somewhere...

...the reins that were loosened.
We must tighten...

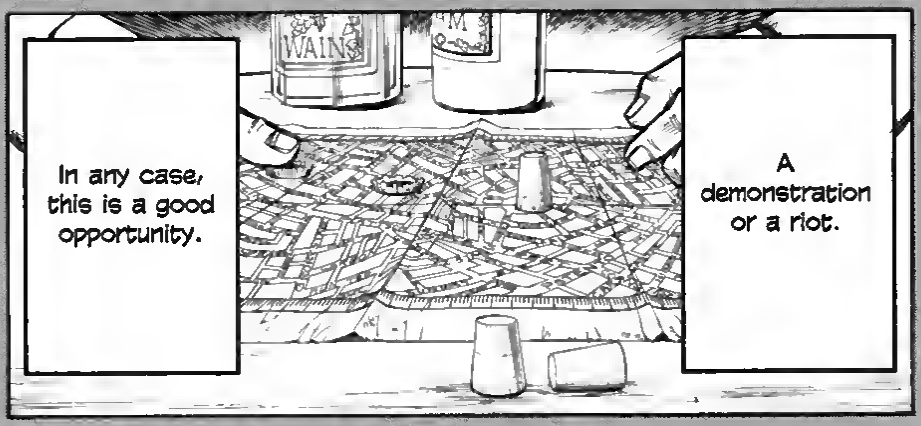

BREATHE
What is the purpose of Claymore One?
Captain.

That is the most important purpose of Claymore One.
"To be feared by the public."

That's right.
All of it is to embed fear.
...taking control by leaving no offender alive.
Rushing in without worrying about hostages...

We prevent crime by the fear...that is Claymore One!!
"If you go against the government, a giant sword will be flung down."
There is no one in my troop...
Not one!!
...who thinks otherwise.

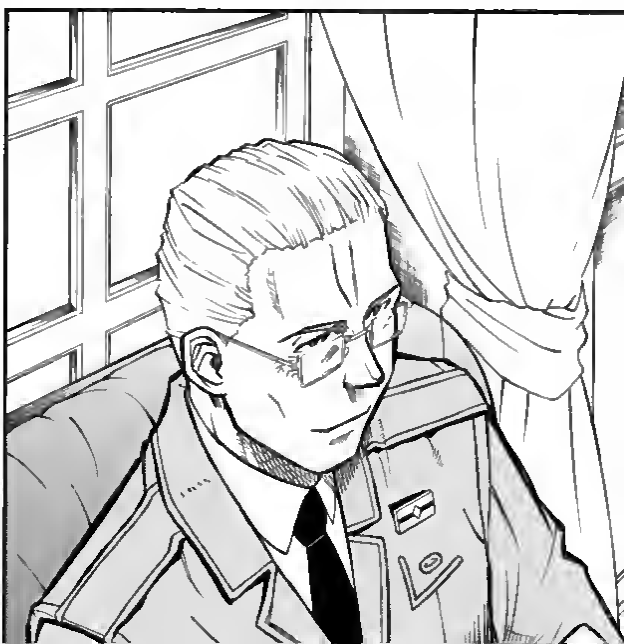
Regarding the Red Cap.
Sir!
Good! Marco.
...reported last night.
Soldiers of the Tri Dagger who have infiltrated the group...
The leaders of the group are scheming a big plot.

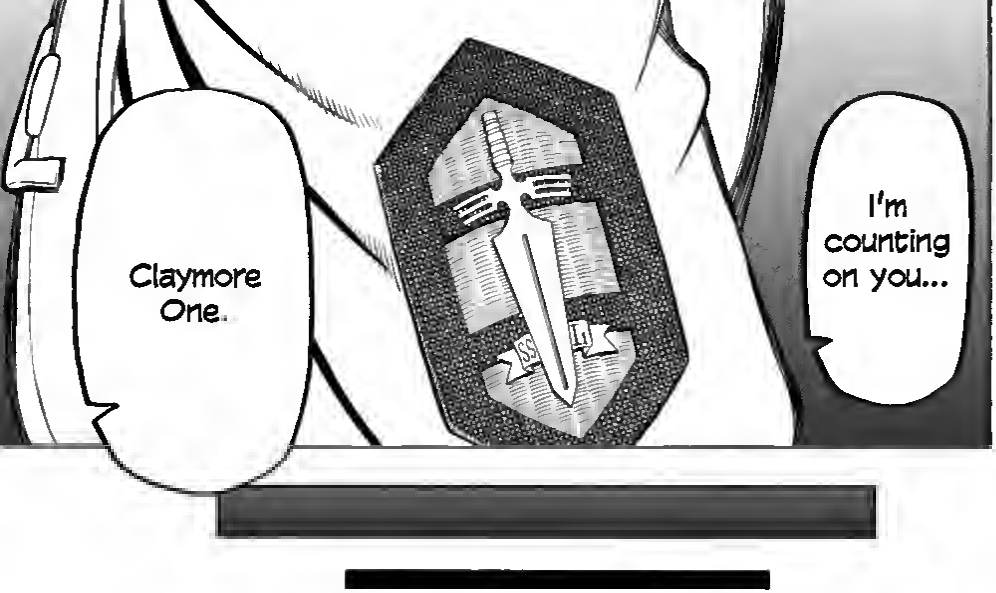

In any case, this is a good opportunity.
A demonstration or a riot.

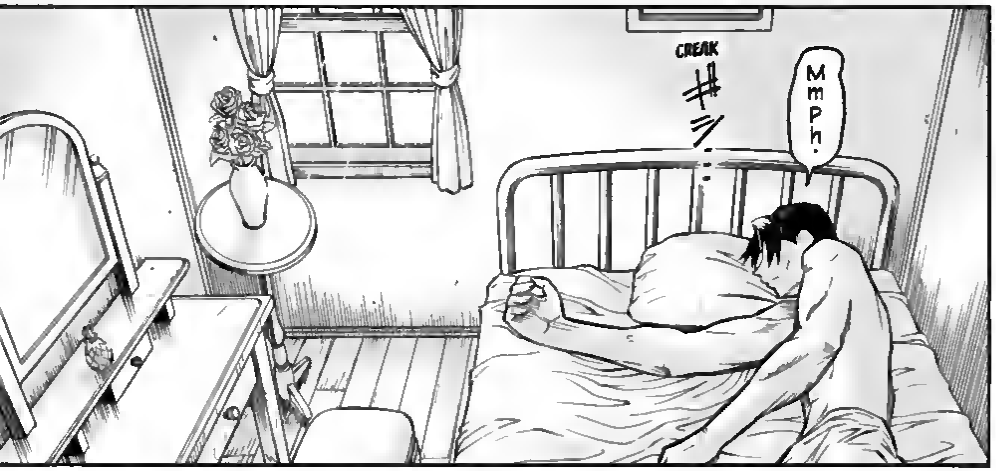
We will not prevent the crime.
Destroy their plot...
...and show the immense power of the government!

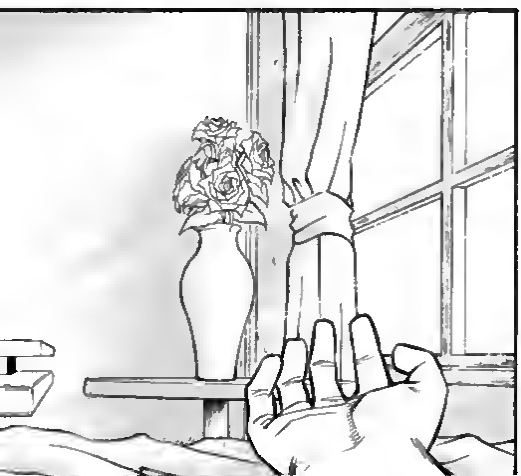
...cruelly! And Unremorsefully! Destroy them thoroughly!!
...and when the eyes of the public are upon them...
We will let them do it...

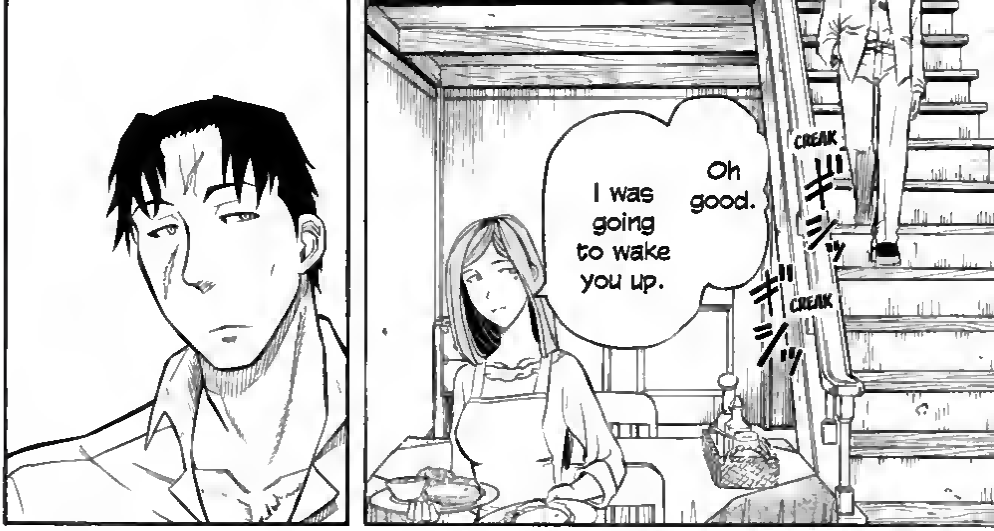
Then...
...thoroughly, we will!

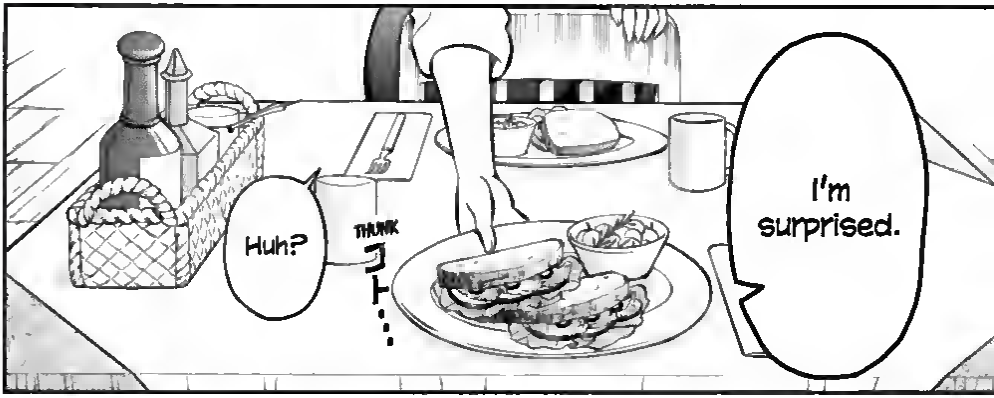



Claymore One.
I'm counting on you...


CREAK
Mmph.

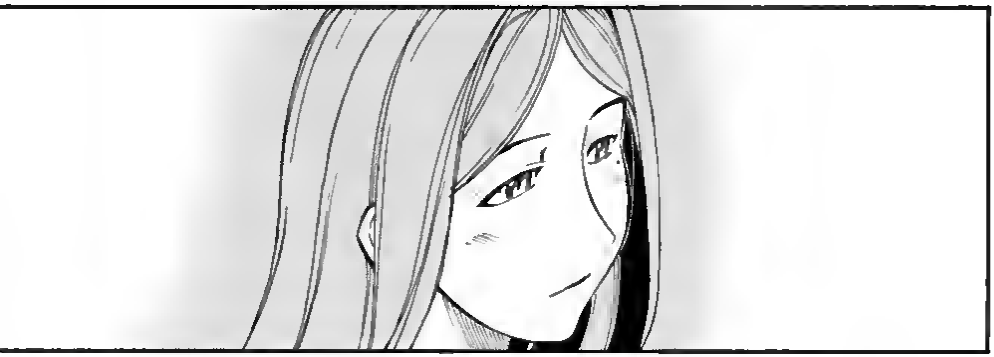



I was going to wake you up.
Oh good.
CREAK
CREAK


Huh?
THUNK
I'm surprised.

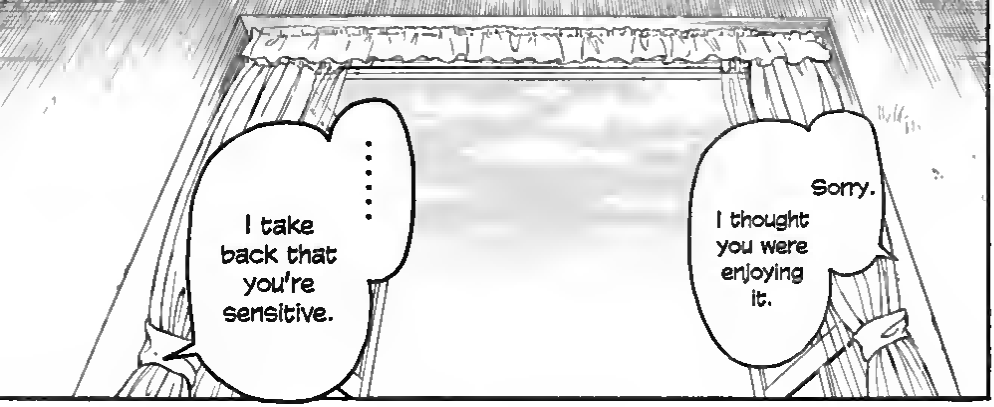
...were flowers.
The first thing I saw when I woke up...
Should I not have?

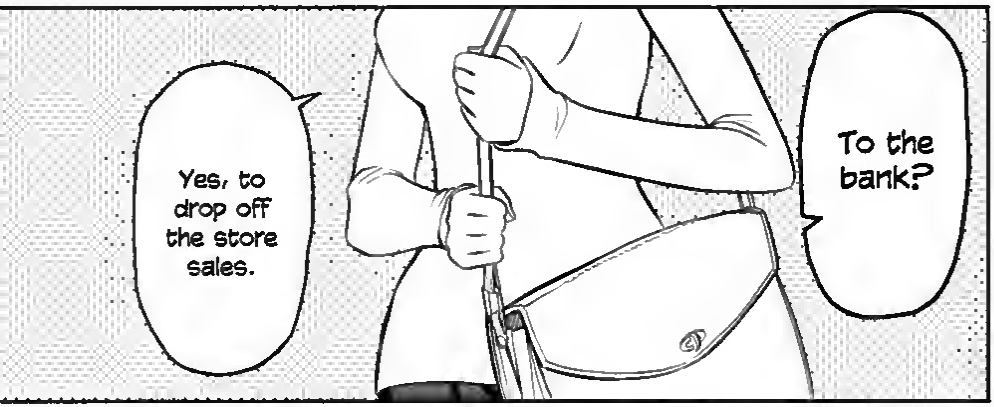
I was pleasantly surprised.
It's not bad at all.



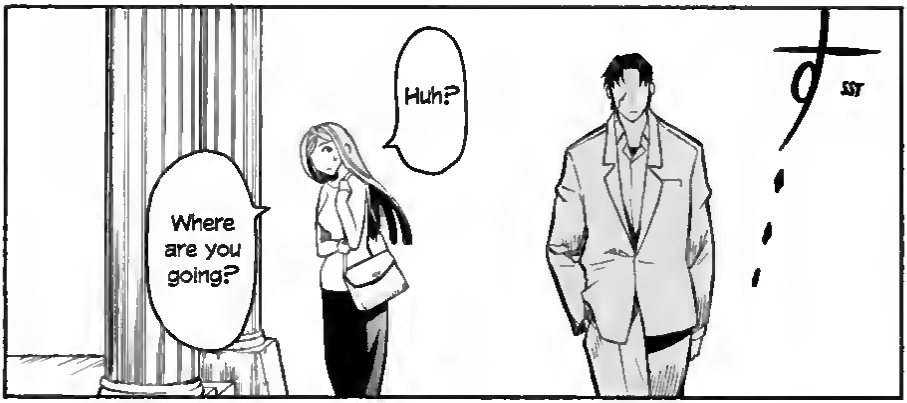
Why do I always pick the same type of men?
Men who look violent on the outside, but sensitive inside...

You make me sound...
...like a violent man.
You are violent!
I thought I was going to die several times last night!
SCOOT
A-AHEM
コ…コホン…

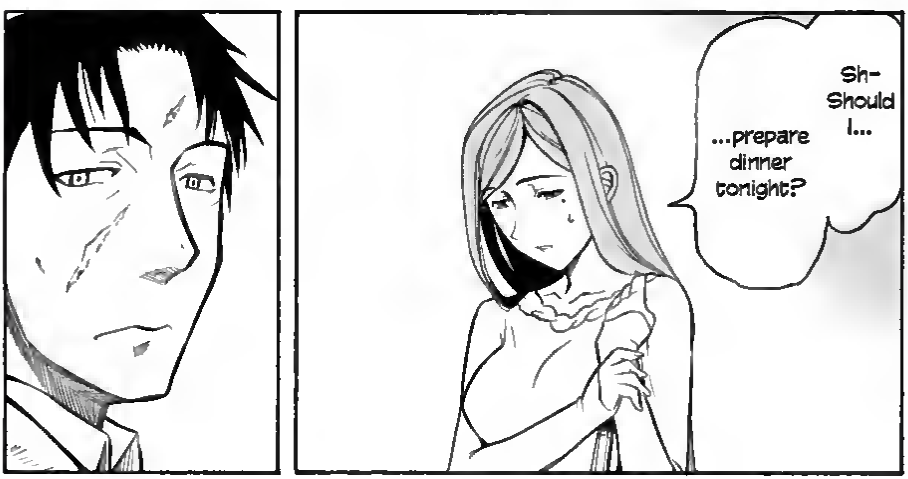

I take back that you're sensitive.
.....
Sorry. I thought you were enjoying it.

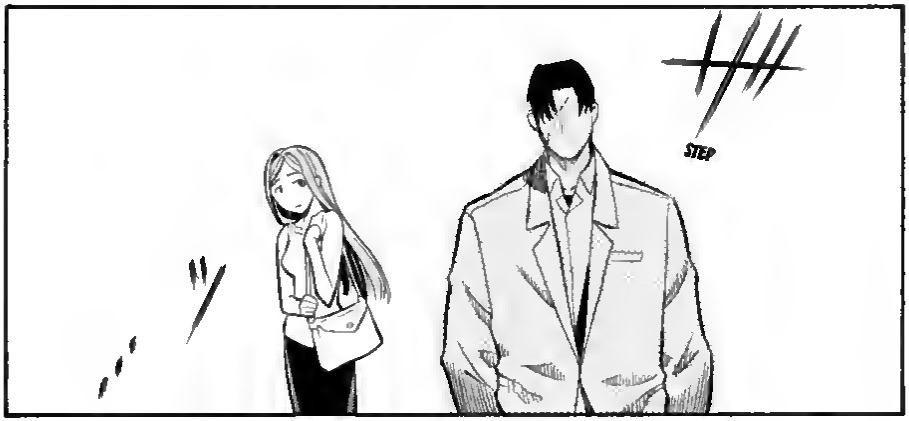

Yes, to drop off the store sales.
To the bank?

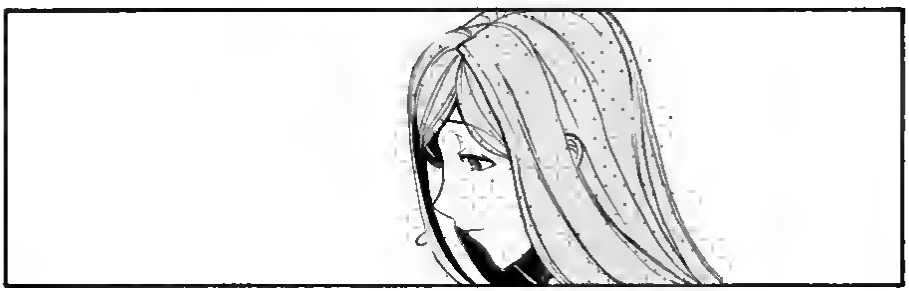
And I live alone now.
It's been dangerous lately.


Where are you going?
Huh?

There's a store I frequent around the corner.
Oh.

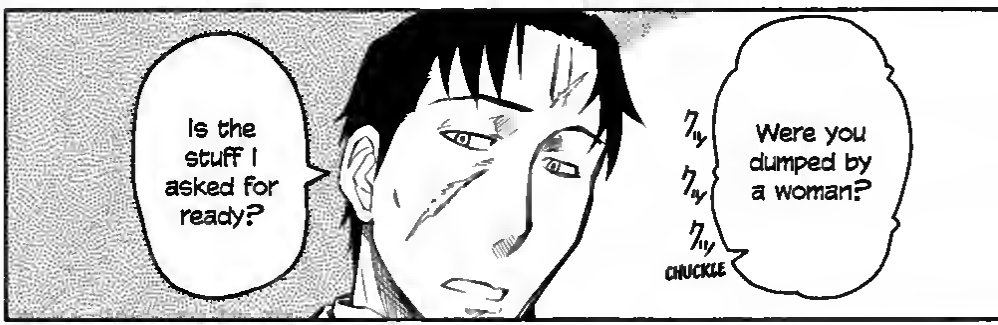

...prepare dinner tonight?
Sh- Should I...


STEP

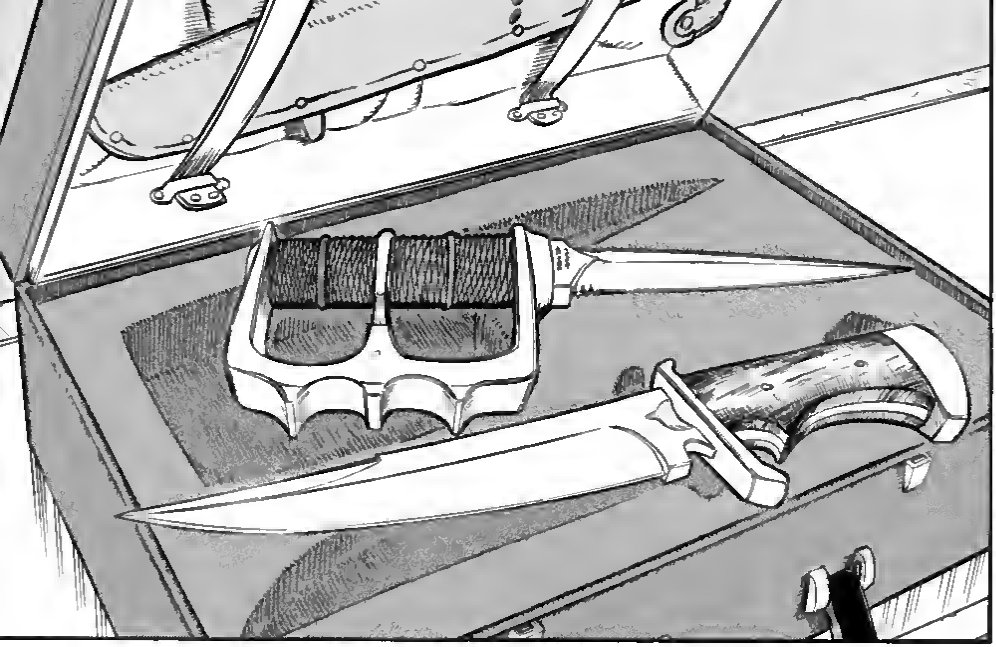


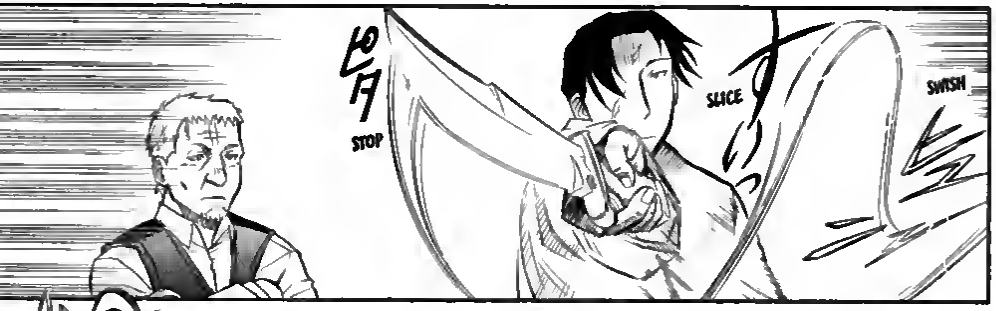
Welcome...
Oh, it's you.
CLANG
KNIFE SHOP

You look like crap.
Like a dull knife sharpened by an amateur.


Were you dumped by a woman?
CHUCKLE
Is the stuff I asked for ready?

Kind of.
THUD
Don't break it so easily next time.




STOP
SLICE
SWISH

BANG
I'm going to take your grip mold and custom fit it.
I told you already.
The balance of the grip isn't good.

BANG
BANG
Gunfire?
It's close!

!

H-Hey.

...the bank.

That's...

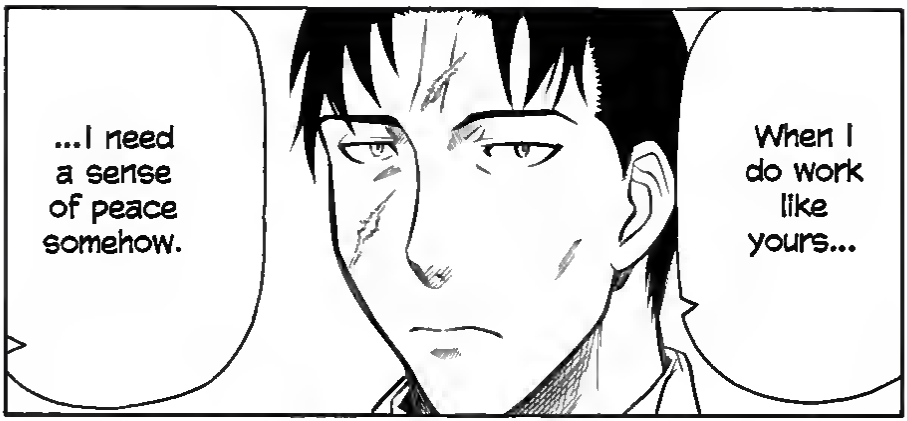
Listen comrades!
Our purpose is not robbery!

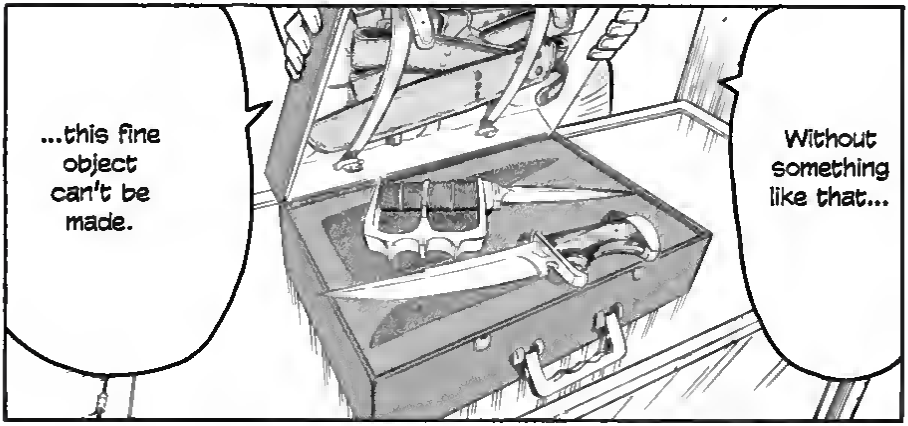
We are the Red Cap.
We want to free the citizens from a corrupt government.

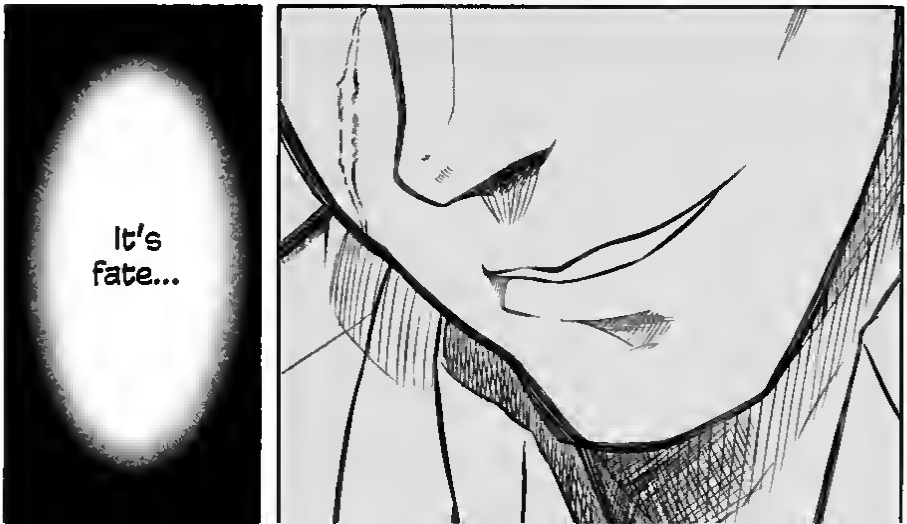
We want to talk about the government's financial plans...
...and occupy this bank as a place for negotiations.

But...
Our purpose is to negotiate with the government— that's all!
...who don't understand our stance.
...we will not hesitate to shoot those...

They plan on taking hostages.
It's been five minutes since the first gun shot. There's no sign of them making a getaway.
I guess I have to close shop today.
...was unlucky.
That woman...
Hmm? Oh yeah.
You have flowers.


...I need a sense of peace somehow.
When I do work like yours...


...this fine object can't be made.
Without something like that...


It's fate...

GRIP
SWISH
SWRRT
CLICK

BSST

Hey!
What the hell are you doing!?

All of a sudden, I want a woman.

I'm going to go get her.
CLANG

Don't think about the casualty of hostages!!
The order is thoroughly clear.

Claymore One.
Sortie!
See You Next Time!

PumpkinScissors

Translation Notes

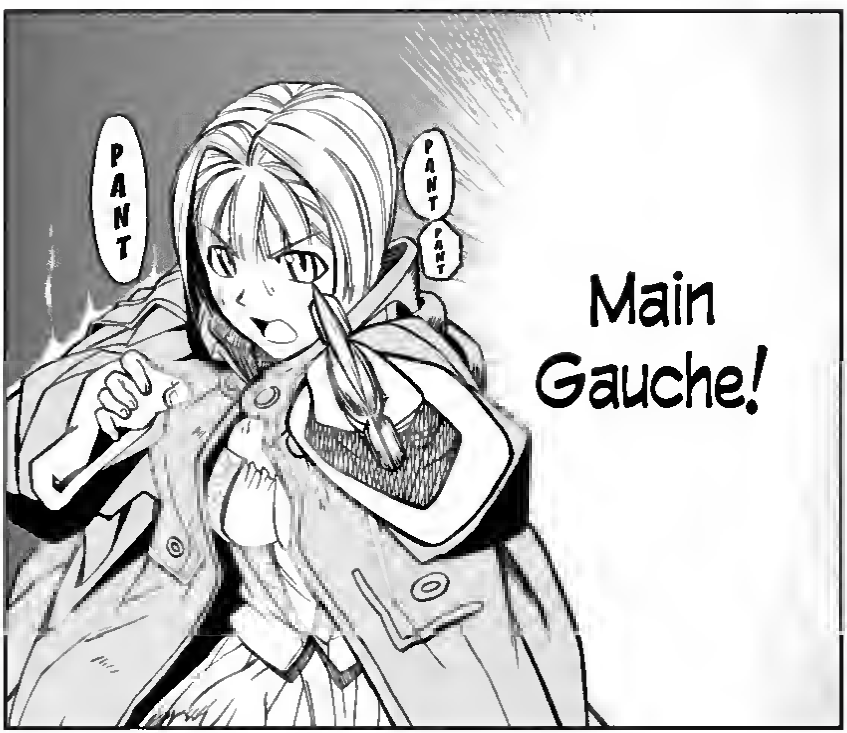
Japanese is a tricky language far most Westerners, and translation is often more on ort thon o science. For your edificotion ond reading pleasure, here are notes an some af the places where we could hove gone in o different direction, or where o Joponese cultural reference is used.

FLAMME, PAGE 27

Flamme is German for "flame." Alice's greot-grondfother's sword wos called Noble Flamme.

GAUCHE, PAGE 30

Gauche is French for "left."



SEPTIEME, PAGE 118

Septieme is French for "seventh." The Princess is the seventh child in her royal family.

SORTIE, PAGE 218

"Sartie" is a term far deplayment af a military unit. It has been adapted fram the French term meaning "ta leave" ar "ta ga aut with a specific purpase."